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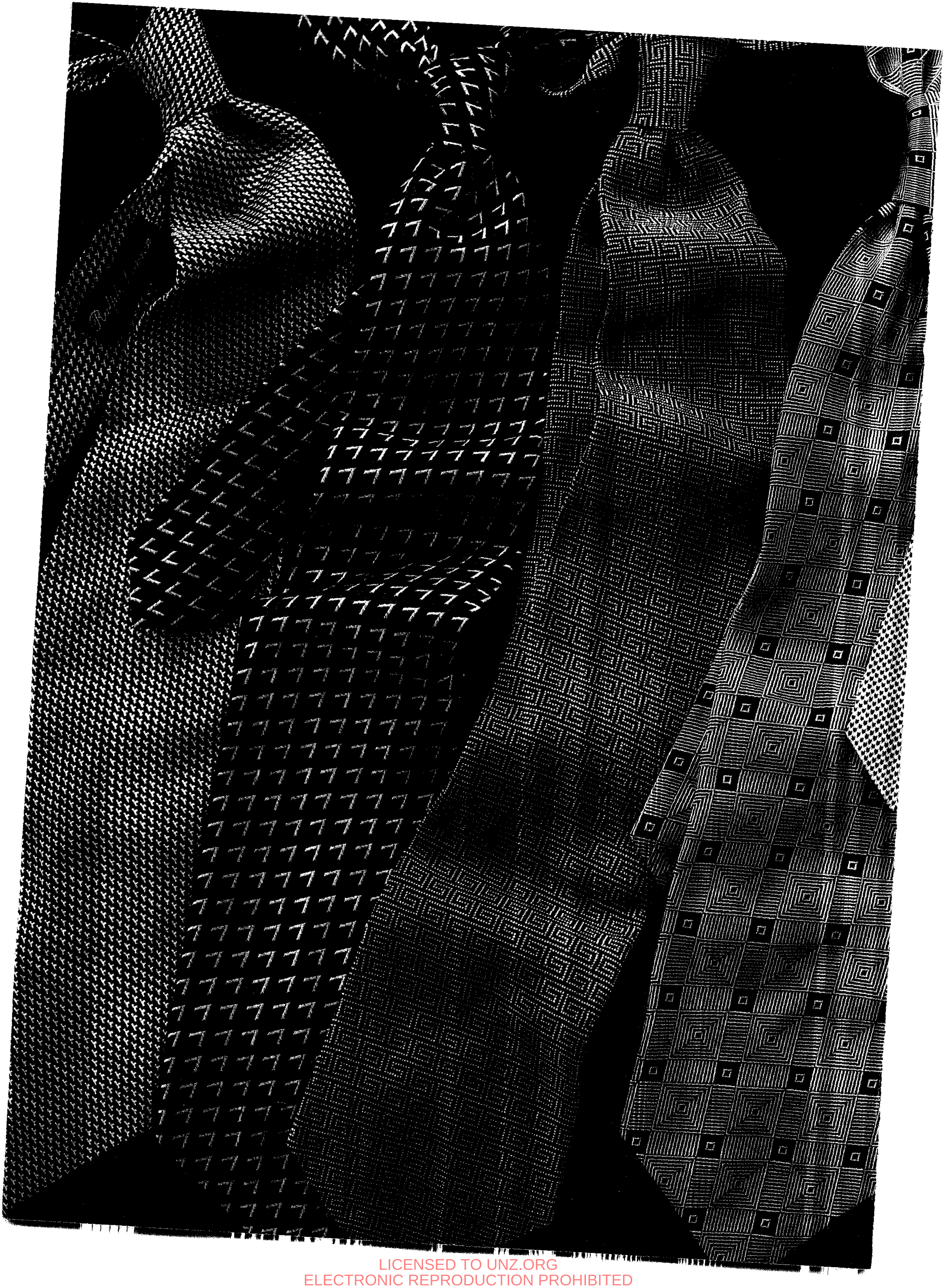

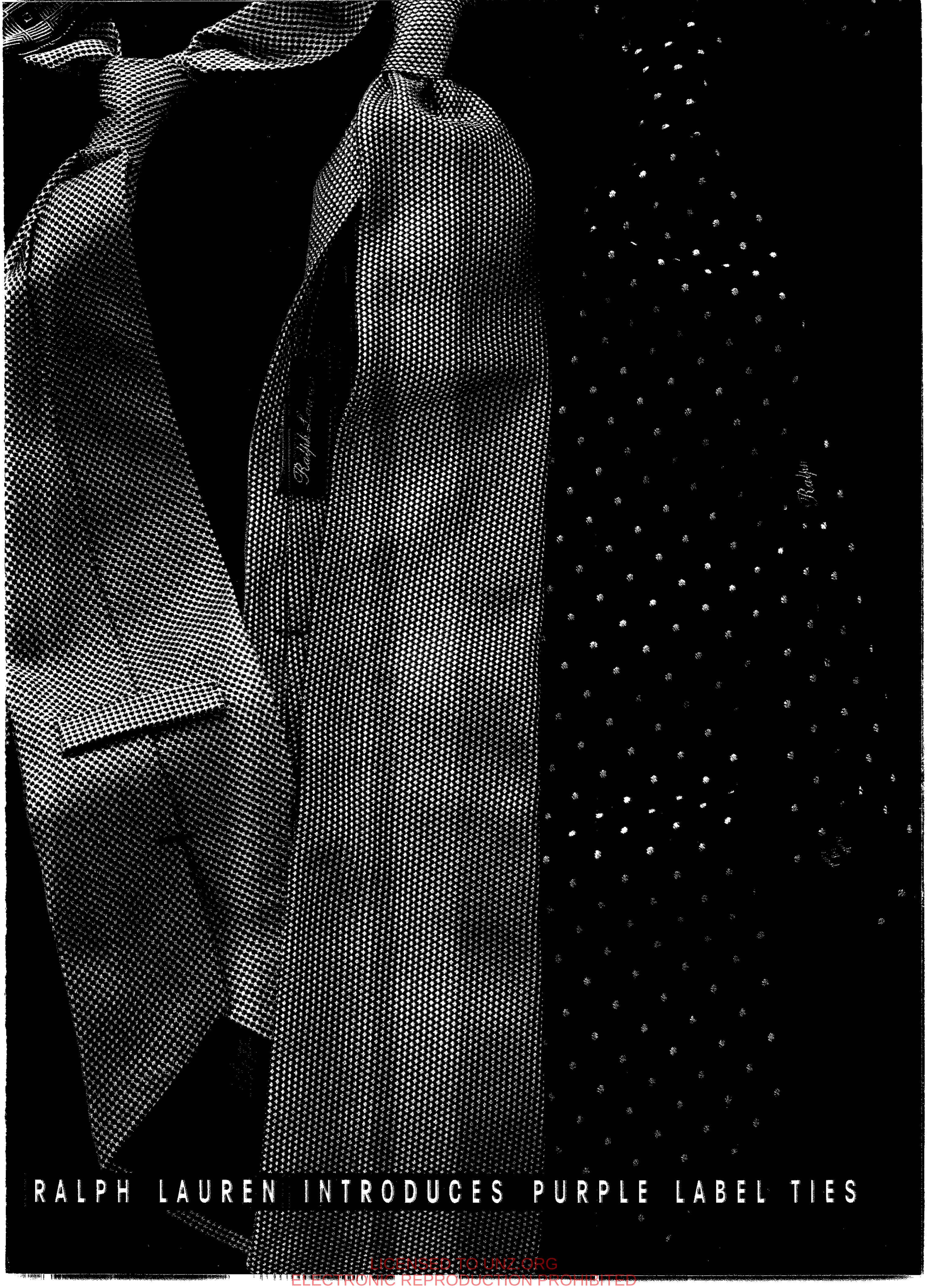
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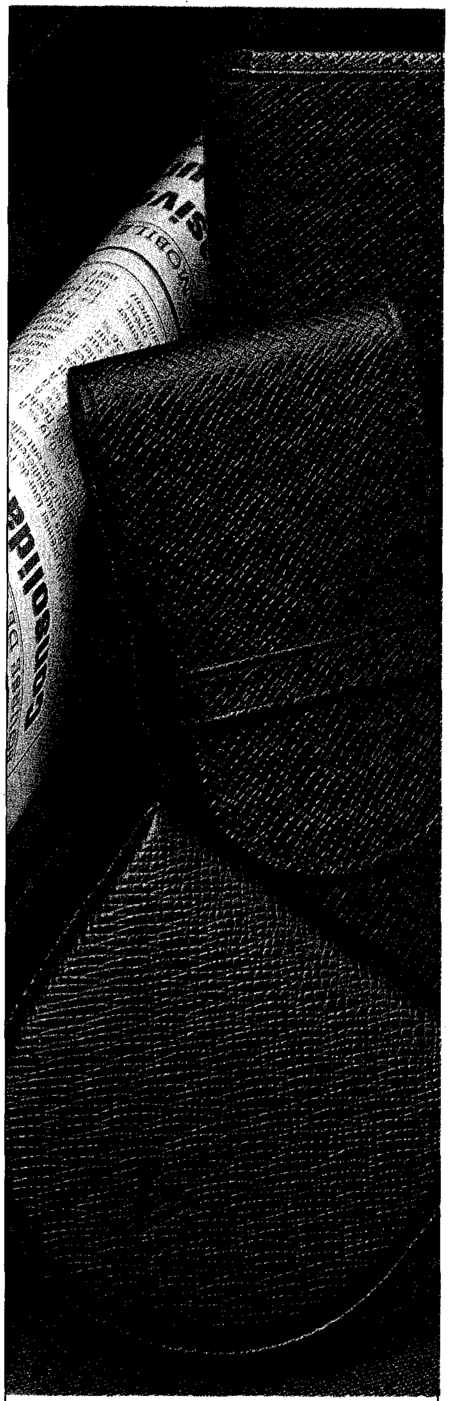

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THE NEW YORKER

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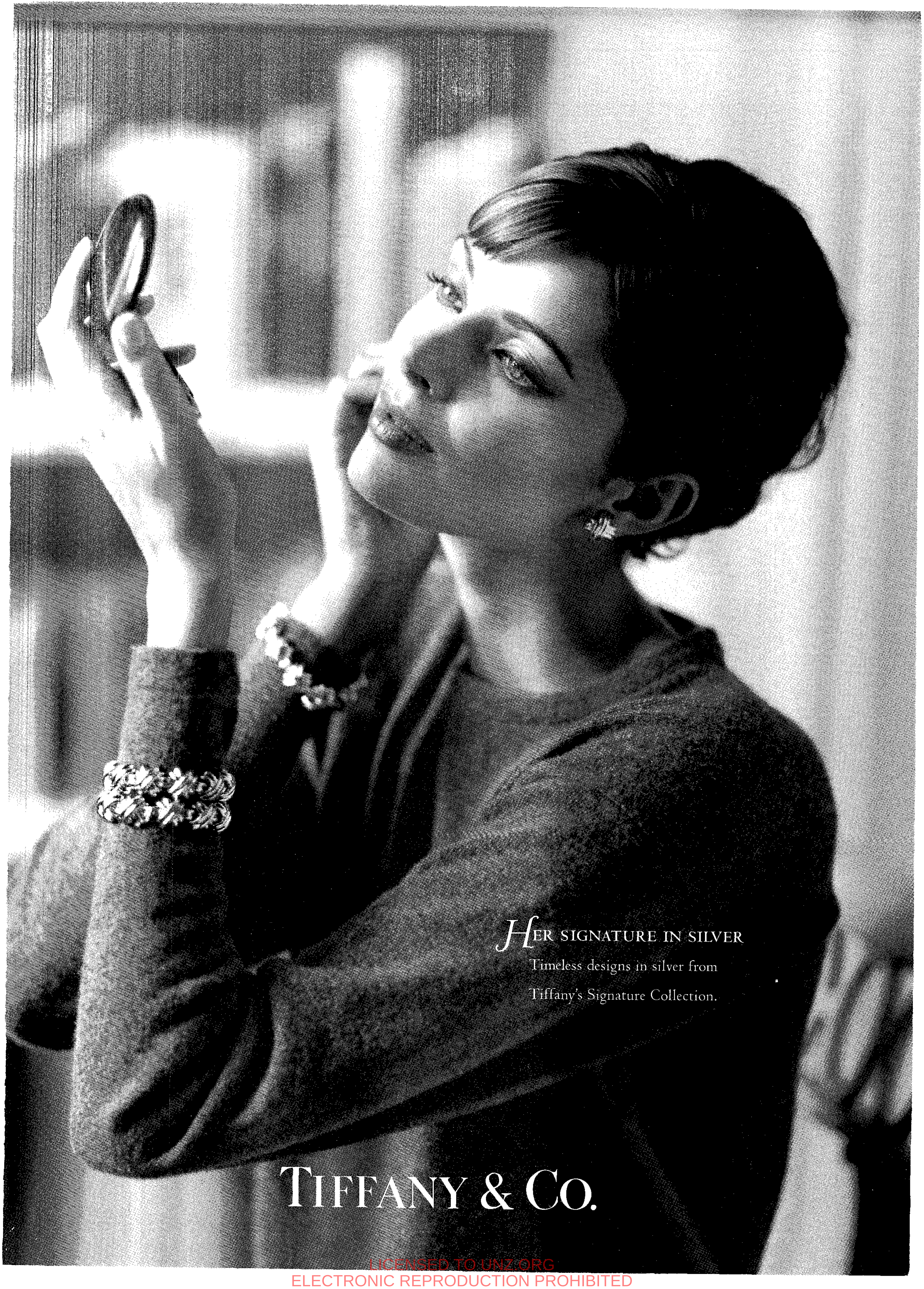
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COMMENT

A HARDER CHOICE

A woman's right that may sometimes be wrong.

IN the jargon of political consultants, a "wedge issue" is one that, on being pushed sharp end first into a hairline crack and pounded home with a rhetorical sledgehammer, shatters the unity of the other side. From the standpoint of the social conservatives who swept to congressional power a year ago, it's hard to imagine an edgier wedge than one capable of separating Senator Edward Kennedy, the six-term liberal monument, from his twenty-eight-year-old son, Patrick, a freshman member of Rhode Island's House delegation, on some high-profile piece of legislation. And the conservatives have now fashioned a wedge capable of that very feat. Their tool of choice—or, to put it another way, their tool against choice—is a bill that has already been passed by the House, where Representative Kennedy voted for it, and is expected to get final consideration this week on the Senate floor, where Senator Kennedy will vote against it. The bill—S. 939, the Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act of 1995—stands, if it passes, to become the first time in history that Congress has outlawed a medical procedure.

To the consternation of abortion-rights proponents in Washington and elsewhere, S. 939 is proving to be a masterpiece of pro-life public relations—one that may well succeed in entrapping the pro-choice movement in its own rhetoric, with potentially tragic consequences for women across the country. For thoughtful people on both sides of the abortion controversy, however, the bill raises disturbing, and even tormenting, questions. At its heart is an effort to criminalize a rare late-term abortion procedure. The procedure, technically known as intact dilation and extraction, seems, on its face, so repellent that only the most extreme advocates of abortion rights feel comfortable defending it unambiguously. The physician pulls the fetus, often still alive, feet first from the birth canal until only the head is lodged inside the mother's body. At that point an instrument is inserted in the base of the fetal skull, the brains are suctioned out, and the cranium is collapsed, allowing for a final, lifeless delivery. Now that advances in neonatology have pushed the frontiers of viability to as early a point as the twenty-fifth week of

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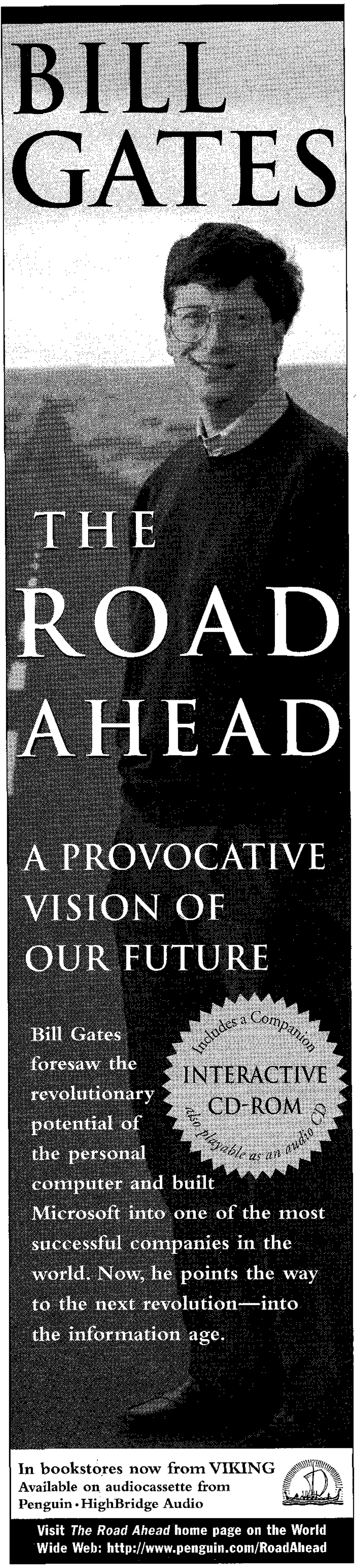

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Victoria Roberts

"Cheese fondue has gone wherever crêpes Suzette and tuna Mornay went."

• •

pregnancy, intact dilation and extraction, which can be used as late as the twenty-fourth week, can be portrayed—and not altogether implausibly—as bordering on infanticide.

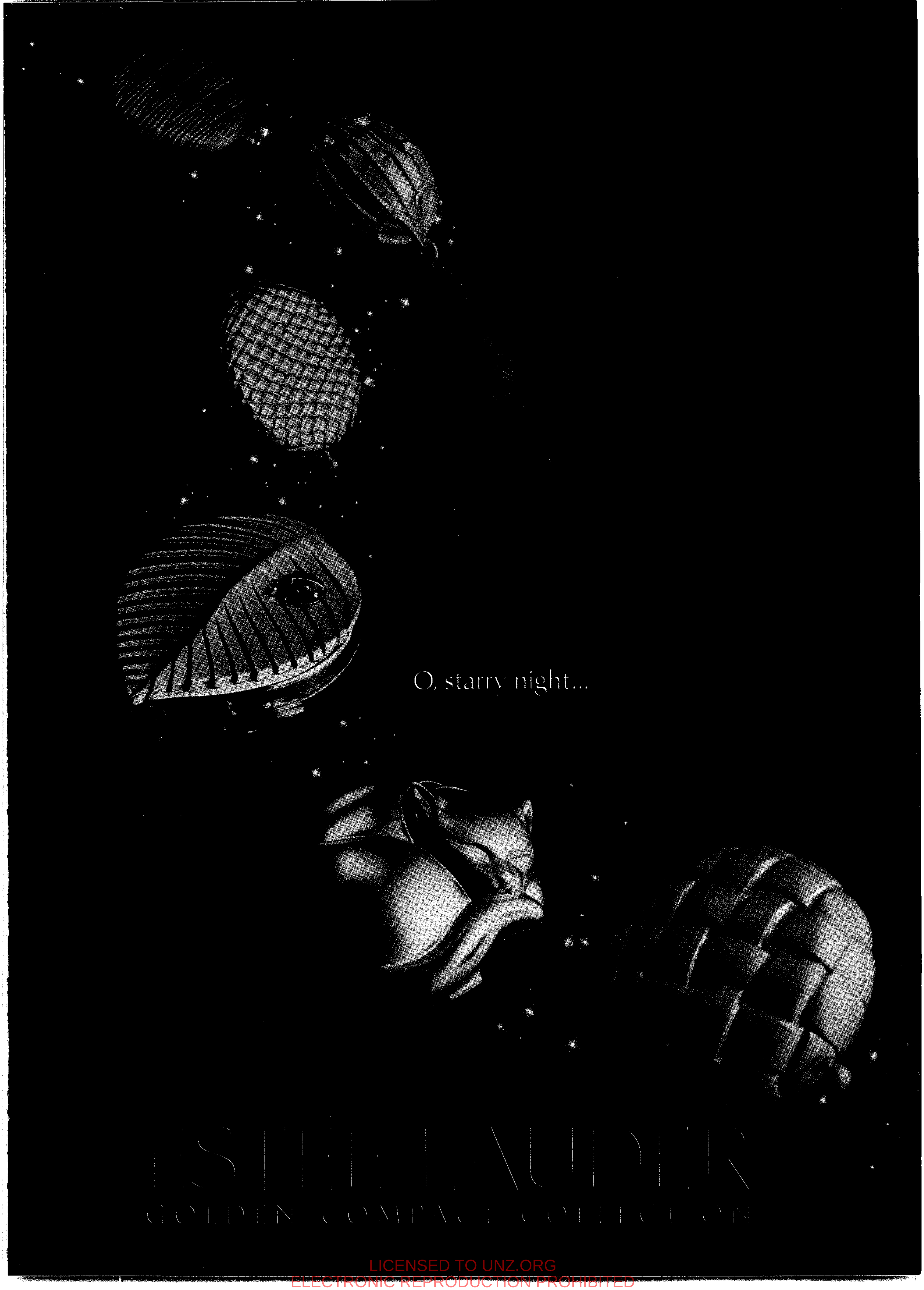
In the rhetoric of pro-life hard-liners, "partial-birth abortion" is a senselessly sadistic way for libertines to avoid the consequences of their own sexual irresponsibility. Yet of the approximately one and a half million abortions performed in the United States each year, only an estimated thirteen thousand are performed after the twentieth week of pregnancy, and very few of these—probably several hundred—entail intact dilation and extraction. And most of the several hundred—no one can say for sure that this is true of all of them—are performed in cases of severe fetal abnormalities or dire health risks to the mother. Thus reasonable people might wonder why such a pitched battle is being waged at the highest levels of government over a medical procedure rare enough to qualify as freakish.

The answer, of course, lies in politics. "Partial-birth abortion," which serves pro-lifers much as armor-piercing "cop-killer bullets" serve gun-control advocates, is a topic so toxic that it forces many of the other side's usual supporters to flee. The gambit is a canny one for abortion opponents such as the bill's sponsor, Representative Charles T. Canady, a forty-one-year-old Florida Republican—unattached, childless, and, of course, "pro-family"—who has carried much of the Christian right's crusade into Congress. To Canady's satisfaction, his bill, which sailed through the House on the votes of seventy-three of the hundred and ninety-eight Democrats and all but nineteen of the two hundred and thirty-four Republicans, has exposed a weakness in the pro-choice movement: its leaders' unwillingness to acknowledge that there might be circumstances under which the choice to have an abortion is morally wrong. In the debate over intact dilation and extraction, pro-choice leaders seem to be afraid that if they go further than Kate Michelman, the president of the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League, has done—she has observed that "there may be times when this procedure is not the most appropriate"—they will somehow be saying that the procedure itself ought to be illegal. Their failure to concede that there may be times when the choice is not just inadvisable but immoral has left them politically vulnerable.

The pity is that there is a compelling case to be made for many, indeed most, of the abortions that S. 939 would criminalize. Intact dilation and extraction is frequently the only remedy left to parents who get nightmarish medical news about fetal deformities too late to safely resort to any other form of abortion: other procedures available at such a late stage may cause sterility or even death. But to make the case for such abortions—none of which would be permitted under the proposed law—requires a willingness to draw subtle moral distinctions, as opposed to merely legal ones.

Having already been marginalized on the public-relations front, abortion-rights activists are in serious peril this week of being marginalized politically as well. If that happens, the real losers will be women such as Coreen Costello. Mrs. Costello, a full-time mother of two who lives in California, was so strongly opposed to abortion that on becoming pregnant she underwent none of the medical tests that would detect fetal abnormalities. As she later put it, "we were prepared to take whatever we got." But in the seventh month of her pregnancy she started having contractions, and soon learned she was carrying a deformed baby girl whose birth would result in the baby's death and perhaps her own as well. Although she agonized about it, Mrs. Costello consented to an intact dilation and extraction, and she was left well enough to become pregnant again this year. After listening to the Senate's debate last week, in which doctors who perform such abortions were described as murderers, Mrs. Costello said, "I threw up. It was just so ignorant. This was a wanted pregnancy. This is a tragedy that happens to families—good families."

In Washington, where "family values" is a slogan frequently at odds with the practice of actually valuing families, the anguish of women like Mrs. Costello is being drowned out in a clash of ideologies. The advocates of choice, by refusing to entertain the idea that some abortions under some circumstances might in fact be wrong, are preventing themselves from arguing convincingly for those that are right. By locking themselves out of the moral arena, they have created a vacuum in which zealots like Representative Canady can do their misleading, and potentially life-threatening, worst. —JANE MAYER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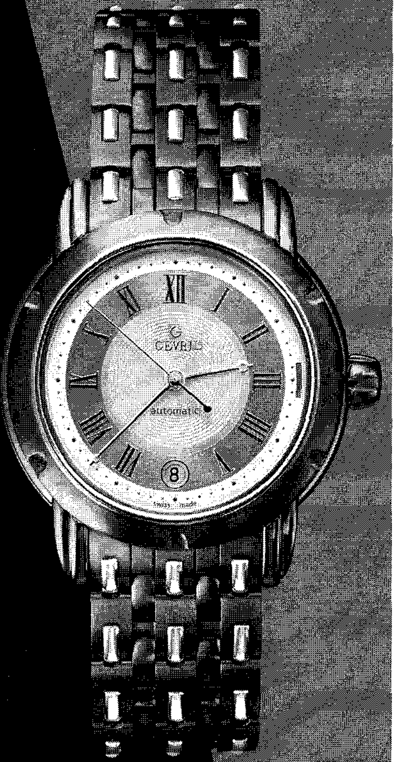

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IN THE MAIL

JUDGING THE JURY

In his piece on the Simpson verdict ("Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Black Man," October 23rd), Henry Louis Gates, Jr., says that a black woman referring to Simpson told the *Times*, "He has been punished enough." On one level, that comment doesn't make any sense: if Simpson is innocent he shouldn't be punished at all, and if he's guilty he wasn't punished anywhere near enough. On another level, though, it makes a great deal of sense. What this woman was saying, I suspect, is that all blacks have been punished enough.

WILLIAM CHAPIN
Sonoma, Calif.

The Simpson verdict forcefully reminded me, a white person who has been a lifelong supporter of black causes, that history can repeat itself in surprising ways. In 1958, the Birmingham *News* sent me to cover the trial of a Mississippi sheriff who had been charged with the murder of a black prisoner in his jail. His guilt was blatant, but the white jury took only five minutes to declare him not guilty. A cub reporter at the time, I had to stop my car and vomit after I drove away.

I watched the Simpson verdict on TV and, stunned, managed to control my nausea with deep breathing: thirty-seven years in journalism produce some fringe benefits. After much thought and anguish, it seems clear that the verdicts in both Mississippi and Los Angeles represent something much simpler than what the current analysis suggests. They were the result of demagogic attorneys and ignorant jurors incapable of considering legal evidence. I have few illusions left after a lifetime in the civil-rights wars, but it's comforting to learn that blacks can be as dumb as whites. Peace, everybody.

E. E. HAMILTON
Summerville, S.C.

Having just served on a jury that found the defendant guilty of robbery, I vividly remember the judge's charge to us in making our deliberations. In the Simpson case, the so-called "mountain of evidence" was more a mountain of "maybe"s and "probably"s. The crux of the case was whether or not to trust both the DNA and the L.A.P.D. The jury refused to send a man to prison on that basis, and I suspect that if I had been one of them I would have concurred. If a mostly black jury understood reasonable doubt better than a white one would have, more power to them.

ROBERT GREENE
Ladysmith, Wis.

HOPE IN IRELAND

After a poetry reading at Iona College in 1973, Seamus Heaney replied with a wry smile to a question seeking his solution to the fighting in Northern Ireland. "That will require a change of heart," he said. Helen Vendler, in "A Nobel for the North" (Books, October 23rd), defends Philip Larkin against Heaney's censure of his work as "defeatist" and attributes Heaney's attitude to "the threat that such depression poses to that obdurate social hope which Heaney refuses to relinquish." I see a distinct possibility that the persistent argument within Heaney between "the urgency of witness and the urgency of delight," as Vendler puts it, has been indirectly instrumental in undermining at least some of the obdurate resistance to a "change of heart" in Ireland.

LEO COOLEY
Tarrytown, N.Y.

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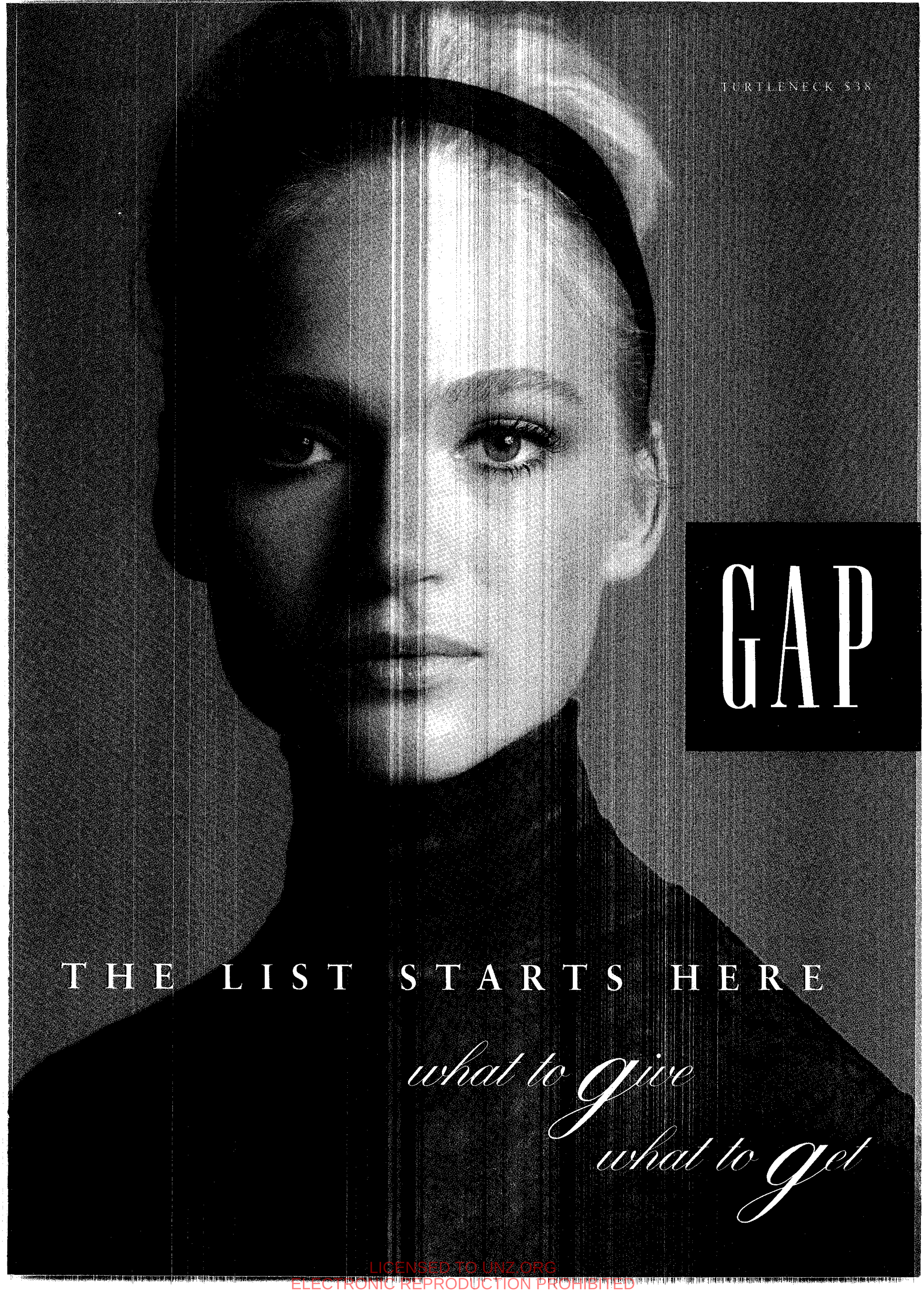
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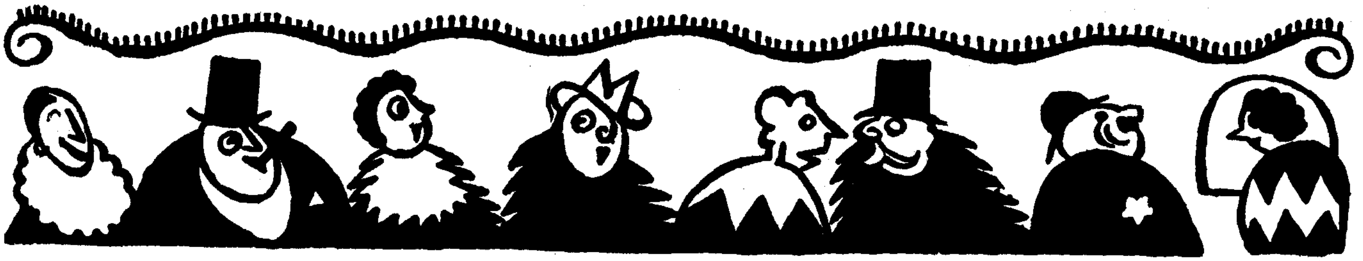

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Black Ink—Four one-act plays by members of Playwrights Horizons' African-American Playwrights Unit: "Cover," by Beverly Smith-Dawson; "The Bodhisattva Locksmith," by Lynn Martin; "Man in Polyester Suit," by Ed DuRanté; and "Life by Asphyxiation," by Kia Corthron. In previews through Dec. 2. Opens Dec. 3 at 7. (416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Brother Marx Nativity—Vermont's Bread and Puppet Theatre brings its version of the Christmas story—an adaptation by Peter Schumann, based on the Gospels of Luke and Matthew and on Karl Marx's "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts"—to town for the holiday season. Opens Nov. 30 and continues through Dec. 17. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 254-1109.)

Holiday—Tony Goldwyn and Laura Linney star in a revival of Philip Barry's 1929 comedy, directed by David Warren. In previews through Dec. 2. Opens Dec. 3 at 6:30. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

The Misanthrope—A new translation of Molière's comedy, by Lynn Martin, which she has set in nineteen-twenties Paris. In previews through Dec. 2. Opens Dec. 3 at 6:30. (CSC, 136 E. 13th St. 803-5443.)

Molière's Shorts—This Actors Shakespeare Company production, an adaptation of four of the playwright's comedies, throws vaudeville routines, Marx Brothers' jokes, and other elements into the mix. Opens Dec. 1 at 8 and continues through Dec. 23. (Theatre at St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 255-6895.)

Oblivion Postponed—A comedy-drama about a straight Ohio couple and a gay New York couple who meet while vacationing in Rome. Written by Ron Nyswaner. In previews. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103.)

Valley Song—The South African playwright Athol Fugard appears with Lisa Gay Hamilton in his new drama, about the effects of political change in his homeland. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Wasp and Other Plays—Four new one-acts by Steve Martin. Previews begin Nov. 30. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Antigone—The Pearl Theatre's clamorous staging of Sophocles' tragedy. (80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802. Closes Dec. 9.)

Black Girl—Leslie Uggams plays Mama Rosie, in J. E. Franklin's 1971 drama. (Henry Street Settlement, 466 Grand St. 598-0400. Closes Dec. 10.)

Bring In 'Da Noise, Bring In 'Da Funk—A new musical by tap virtuoso Savion Glover, spoken-word artist Reg E. Gaines, and director George C. Wolfe, which stars Glover and Gaines. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400.)

A Christmas Carol—Terrence Mann and Ben Vereen lead a cast of ninety, in this musical version of the holiday classic. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6741.)

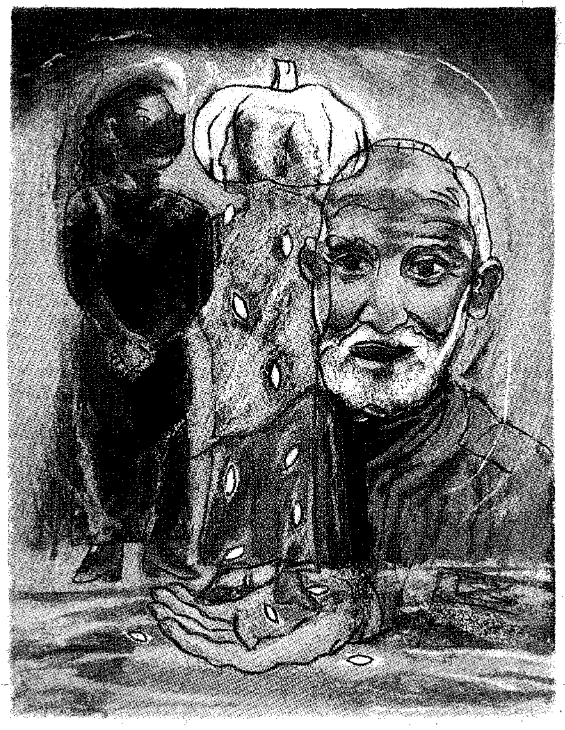
Company—The god of casting doesn't shine on the Roundabout Theatre Company's revival of Stephen Sondheim and George Furth's 1970 musical, but nothing can dim the brilliance of a score whose themes of fear, loneliness, and anxiety in relationships have become more urgent as the battle between the sexes has intensified. Directed by Scott Ellis. (Reviewed in our issue of 10/23/95.) (Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400. Closes Dec. 3.)

Dangerous Corner—As directed by David Mamet, the characters in J. B. Priestley's 1932 mystery—a meditation on the fragile interconnectedness of people's lives—don't seem connected at all. The biggest mystery is why everyone onstage seems so strangely wooden. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 239-6200.)

Double Identity—The Folksbiene Playhouse presents a new Yiddish musical. Simultaneous translations in English and in Russian are available. (123 E. 55th St. 755-2231.)

The Eight: Reindeer Monologues—The Adobe Theatre Company brings Jeff Goode's twisted holiday comedy back for a second season. (SoHo Rep, 46 Walker St. 560-7387. Closes Dec. 16.)

A Family Affair—Russian playwright Aleksandr Ostrovsky's 1850 comedy, about corruption in the merchant class, in a translation by Nick Dear. Presented by the Irondale Ensemble Project. (Theatre for the New City, 255 First Ave., at 10th St. 633-1292. Closes Dec. 16.)



Lisa Gay Hamilton and Athol Fugard, in "Valley Song."

MICHAEL S. WERTZ

The Food Chain—The situations in Nicky Silver's new play are familiar and sitcom-ish, but the writing is tangy and memorably funny, and the actors—especially Hope Davis, as a dithery poet, and Phyllis Newman, as a long-suffering Jewish matron whose idea of listening is to talk—give smart, wonderfully fresh performances. Robert Falls directed. (9/11/95) (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

Fool Moon—Clowning and music with Bill Irwin, David Shiner, and North Carolina's Red Clay Ramblers, who have returned to Broadway with their 1993 show. (Ambassador, 215 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

Golden Boy—Joanne Woodward directs a revival of Clifford Odets' 1937 drama, about a young violinist (Greg Naughton) who gives up music for the boxing ring. (45th Street Theatre, 354 W. 45th St. 279-4200. Closes Dec. 16.)

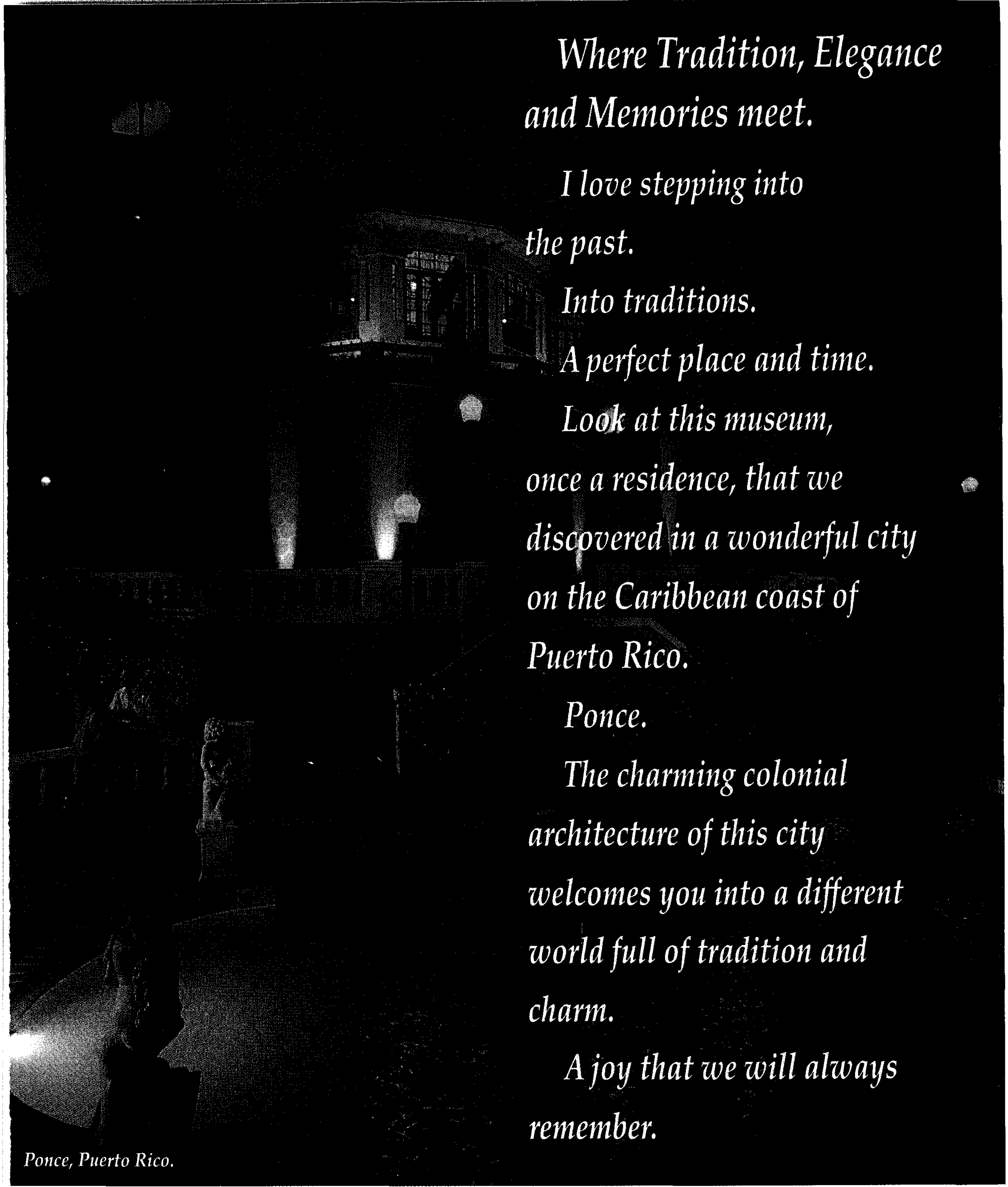
Hello, Dolly!—Carol Channing, a walking exclamation point, is back, and there is much to like about her performance as the meddler extraordinaire: the comic timing, the speaking voice, the star quality (though perhaps it would be more accurate to call what Channing has star quantity). However, you may find yourself so busy disentangling yourself from the sticky netting that she drops over the audience as she trawls for love that you don't notice. The evening is one long curtain call, and a bit of a strain on the nerves, as Channing attempts to prove over and over that, unlike mere mortals, she can do it all as well in her seventies as she could in her forties. Lee Roy Reams directed. (11/27/95) (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

Jam On the Groove—A hip-hop musical by GhettOriginal. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.)

June and Jean in Concert—Continuing its Adrienne Kennedy season, the Signature Theatre Company presents a moving play that is as much an evocation of time and place (nineteen-forties Cleveland) as it is a coming-of-age story. The beautiful set design, by E. David Cosier, divides the stage into different areas of consciousness: ghosts dangle on swings, singers croon in the corners, and family vignettes unfold simultaneously. The effect, both confusing and exhilarating, is of being allowed into someone's mind. Directed by James Houghton. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400. Closes Dec. 10.)

Juno and the Paycock—Sean O'Casey takes on everything from the Troubles to unwed motherhood in his 1924 tale of the downfall of a working-class Dublin family. Under Charlotte Moore's steady direction, the cast—ably led by the dynamic Pauline Flanagan as Juno and WB Brydon as her husband, the Paycock—makes the story cohere into an affecting (and often hilarious) whole. Risteard Cooper is particularly funny as a drunken neighbor. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737. Closes Dec. 10.)

Master Class—Terrence McNally's new play draws on the master classes that Maria Callas gave at



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Juilliard in the early seventies as a way of exploring the great singer's psyche. Zoe Caldwell plays Callas with steely, divaesque conviction—she gives her students (two sopranos and a tenor) and the audience a run for their money. But the Callas here is merely the sum of all the clichés that have been in circulation for years; the Callas who was a consummate professional and an inspired teacher—and a human being—is missing. Leonard Foglia directed the production, which also features David Loud, Karen Kay Cody, Jay Hunter Morris, and not enough of Audra McDonald. (11/27/95) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Mrs. Klein—Two London psychoanalysts—the famous Melanie Klein (Uta Hagen) and her less renowned daughter, Melitta (Laila Robins)—face off in a murderous argument and proceed to browbeat each other with theory. Nicholas Wright's smart though schematic drama dissects Klein's tempestuous relationship with her high-strung daughter (which finally led to estrangement) and shrewdly explores the autobiographical parallels to Klein's seminal thesis on the effects of parental neglect. Robins is excellent; Hagen is brilliant. (11/20/95) (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

The Monogamist—In Christopher Kyle's new play, a self-absorbed middle-aged poet (Arliss Howard), whose collection glorifying fidelity has just been roundly panned, comes home to find his wife (Lisa Emery), a literature professor, in the sack with a student. Scott Elliott's staging is imaginative, Derek McLane's sets are clever, and the performances (especially Caroline Seymour's poetry-show host) are wicked and witty. But nothing unexpected develops; what starts out as a satire of the monogamy myth ends up as just one more sad little story about a midlife crisis. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes Dec. 3.)

Moon Over Buffalo—Ken Ludwig's backstage farce is as forgettable as Carol Burnett (whose last Broadway appearance was thirty years ago) is not: our reigning red-headed queen of comedy is delightful to behold. Tom Moore directed. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Moonlight—In Harold Pinter's first full-length play since 1978, Jason Robards is both avuncular and acrimonious in the role of a dying man whose sons refuse to visit him. Blythe Danner, who plays his wife, conveys silent torment through her superbly expressive eyes. The director, Karel Reisz, has excavated the suffering beneath their sarcasm and perfectly captured Pinter's sense of dread. (11/6/95) (Laura Pels, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400. Closes Dec. 17.)

Murder at Minsing Manor: A Nancy-Boys Mystery—Another antic romp by the Ridiculous Theatrical Company, in which an aging temptress (Everett Quinton) may or may not have dispatched her sugar daddy. The satire of church, state, and the Hardy Boys is right on target. (Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 239-6200.)

New England—In Richard Nelson's latest play, seven Britons and a Frenchwoman living in America gather in Connecticut to mourn a death but end up enacting the playwright's specialty: the harsh comedy of cultural displacement. The crowning irony of their complaints—about the illiteracy of American movies, the low standards of American publishing, and the ineptitude of American actors (a failing this crack cast belies)—is that they've all chosen to live here. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes Dec. 22.)

Nixon's Nixon—This play by Russell Lees, set in the White House during a secret meeting on the night before the President's resignation, has reopened. (MCC, 120 W. 28th St. 727-7765.)

Northeast Local—Tom Donaghy's drama, which begins in the early sixties and ends in the early nineties, stars Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio and Anthony LaPaglia as a working-class couple who come together and then break apart. Both the writing and the performances make for an uneven evening. Mastrantonio is wan, but LaPaglia gives the play an authenticity it wouldn't otherwise have. Also with Terry Alexander and Eileen Heckart, who is dead on as LaPaglia's acid mother. Gerald Gutierrez directed. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Nunsense—The musical about the order of the Little Sisters of Hoboken gets a limited-run revival directed by Dan Goggin, who wrote the music, book, and lyrics. (Triad, 158 W. 72nd St. 799-4599.)

Picasso at the Lapin Agile—Steve Martin's comedy, set in a Paris bar in 1904, is not so much a play of ideas as a play of notions, about art, science, the twentieth century (oh, *that* old thing). It features Einstein (Mark Nelson) and Picasso (Tim Hopper) sittin' around talkin' about how they're going to change the world, and contains a satisfying amount of Martin's coolly absurdist humor—but there's a certain sourness to the proceedings which may put you off. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

Por' Knockers—A group of political activists inadvertently kill several children when they blow up a government building, in Lynn Nottage's latest play. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874. Closes Dec. 10.)

Quills—A new drama by Doug Wright, in which the Marquis de Sade outsmarts the would-be censors who run the insane asylum to which he has been committed. Directed by Howard Shalwitz. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 460-5475.)

Racing Demon—A group of Anglican clergymen confronts the problems of operating a parish in inner-city London, in a play by David Hare. Directed by Richard Eyre. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Riff Raff—In this drama written and directed by Laurence Fishburne, three desperate men

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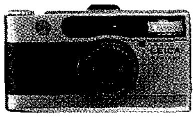

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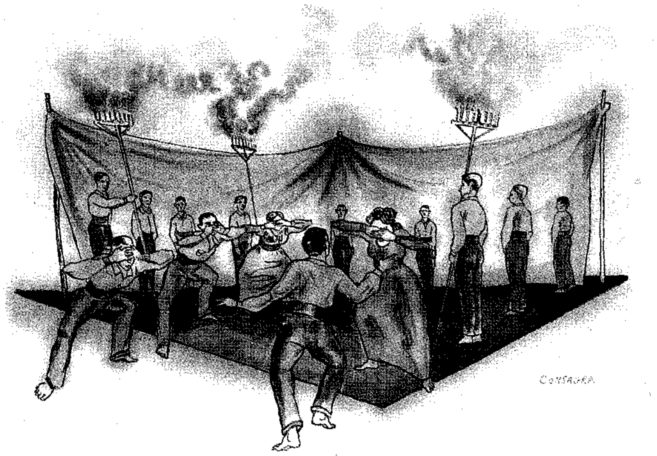
(Fishburne, Titus Welliver, and Heavy D) hole up on the Lower East Side and sort through the residue of a botched robbery attempt. The play strains to make its point about the way loyalties shift among old friends, and the direction is often not as taut as it might be, but there are enough white-hot moments to hold the audience's interest. Heavy D's rap recitation late in the show is worth the price of admission. (Circle Repertory Company, 159 Bleecker St. 239-6200. Closes Dec. 3.)

The School for Scandal—A National Actors Theatre staging of Sheridan's 1777 comedy of manners, starring Simon Jones and Tony Randall. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6280.)

Swinging on a Star—A stylish, heartfelt showcase for Johnny Burke's songs, which include "Pennies from Heaven," "Misty," and "Thank Your Lucky Stars and Stripes." The cast and band are nearly perfect; the show was written and directed by Michael Leeds and choreographed, brilliantly, by Kathleen Marshall. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Tempest—The New York Shakespeare Festival's Central Park production, starring Patrick Stewart and directed by George C. Wolfe, has moved indoors. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)



Ramón Oller's "Tears for Violeta" (Ballet Hispanico), at the Joyce.

Victor/Victoria—Julie Andrews has returned to Broadway to star, with Tony Roberts and Michael Nouri, in a theatrical version of the 1982 movie. But trying to deliver with this show's generic score (by Henry Mancini) and patchwork book (by Blake Edwards, who also directed) is like trying to start a fire with sodden wood: she creates smoke but no heat. The leggy Rachel York, as a blond bimbo, at least enjoys herself—and the audience enjoys her, too. (11/20/95) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

The Warm-Up—Sammy Shore's one-man comedy about his career as the opening act for such stars as Elvis Presley and Frank Sinatra. (American Jewish Theatre, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797. Closes Dec. 3.)

Zombies from the Beyond—This musical sendup of fifties science-fiction movies, by James Valcq, takes an irreverent look at America's naïve fascination with space exploration and all the Cold War paranoia that went with it. The many songs are funny ("Don't just deter 'em, massacre 'em!"), and the cast—particularly Claire Morkin, as the competent ingénue who has to save the world's men from the lascivious Zombettes—is cartoonish perfection. (Players, 115 Macdougal St. 254-5076.)

LONG RUNS

AFTER-PLAY: Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200. . . . **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **DEATH DEFYING ACTS:** Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **GRANDMA SYLVIA'S FUNERAL:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555. . . . **GREASE!:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **HAVING OUR SAY:** Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE HEIRESS:** Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200. . . . **HOW TO SUCCEED IN BUSINESS WITHOUT REALLY TRYING:** Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PARTY:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **ROB BECKER'S DEFENDING THE CAVEMAN:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100. . . . **SHOW BOAT:** Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **SUNSET BOULEVARD:** Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4007. . . . **SWINGTIME CANTEEN:** Blue Angel, 321 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **SYLVIA:** John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200.

DANCE

Ballet Hispanico—The single constraint that Tina Ramirez, the founder and artistic director of the Manhattan-based Ballet Hispanico, places on choreographers—that their dances for her company have either Hispanic music or Hispanic themes—has turned the repertory into a sort of colloquium on things Latin. Last year, two of the works the troupe premièred relied on flamenco music: "Solo," by Susan Marshall, in which a man dances down a steep wooden ramp while balancing a bowl of water on his head; and "Good Night Paradise," by Ramón Oller, with four couples teasing a goose-bumpy tenderness out of the torments and flourishes of the score. Using dramatically different vocabularies—Marshall's minimalist-modernist, Oller's theatrical and emotional—the dancing in each rises to the intensity of the music. Both works return this year, and Oller offers another première, "Tears for Violeta," as well. It was inspired by tales a friend told him about the Holocaust, but the resulting work, set to music of the Ladinos—the Sephardic Jews expelled from Spain in 1492—seems equally inspired by Ramirez's requirement. "Some families still have the keys to their homes in Toledo after five hundred years," Ramirez told us as she watched a recent rehearsal. "This will get applause, but it won't be quick: it will be thoughtful applause." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Nov. 29-Dec. 1 and Dec. 5 at 8, Dec. 2 at 2 and 8, and Dec. 3 at 2 and 7:30. Through Dec. 10.)

"The Nutcracker"—The New York City Ballet returns with its holiday heartwarmer. The performance schedule caters to early bedtimes, so read those tickets carefully. (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Nov. 29-30 and Dec. 5 at 6, Dec. 1 at 8, Dec. 2 at 2 and 8, and Dec. 3 at 1

PIER CONSAGRA

Grippy.

ONE OF the differences
between greatness
and mere eccentricity,
is an ability in the truly great
to draw out the genius
in another.

So it was with some smacking
of the lips that we heard of a
recent tasting organized
by Decanter Magazine.

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MOST LAUDED malt whiskies
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'partnership appeal' with that
other great Scottish contribution
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'a real corker…',
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Yes, you have *smoked it out.*
'I love it and would recommend it.'

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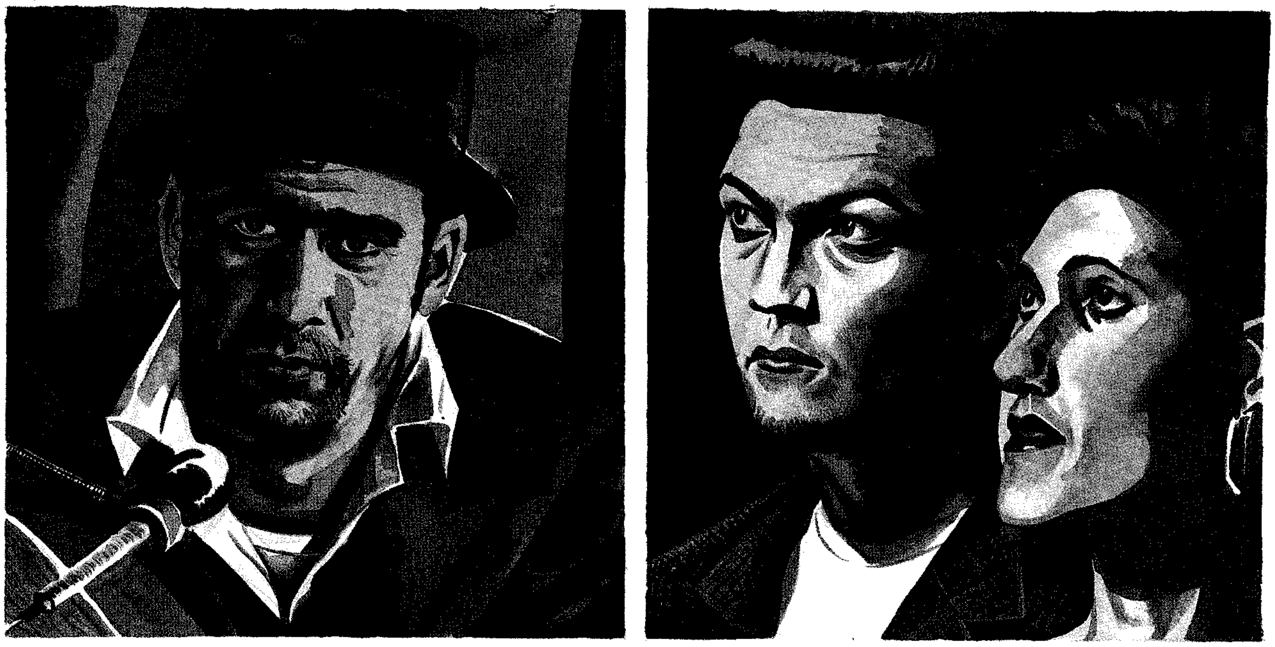
and 5. "The Nutcracker" continues through Dec. 31.)

"The Whispers of Angels"—Choreographer David Rousseve and his twenty-five-member company, Reality, join forces with gospel singer B. J. Crosby and funk balladeer Me'Shell NdegeOcello for the second and final installment of Rousseve's "Dream Series." (BAM's Majestic Theatre, 651 Fulton Ave., Brooklyn. 1-718 636-4100. Nov. 30-Dec. 2 at 8 and Dec. 3 at 3.)

Molissa Fenley—Last year, on the opening night of her engagement at the Joyce, the solo performer and choreographer Molissa Fenley tore a ligament in her knee while onstage. Her new three-part work, "Regions," chronicles her experiments with movement during her convalescence. "Chair Dance" is performed from an armchair; "Ocean Walk" was created later in her recovery, when she was forbidden to jump or turn; only in "Mesa," her most recent work, was she able to add pliés and speed. Other Fenley works will be performed by Peggy Baker ("Inner Enchantments," "Savannah") and Michele Pogliani ("Tilliboyo"). (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. Nov. 29-30 and Dec. 2-3, all at 8. Through Dec. 7. For more information, call 996-1100.)



Mark Eitzel and Everything But the Girl, at the Supper Club.

JENNY WILLIAMS

"Ivy Grows"—The Donna Uchizono company presents two works that are variations on a theme: the evolution of women's roles throughout history. Katherine Maurer designed the costumes, including the dancers' tremendous orange wigs, made of feathers, yarn, and straw. Sculptor David Hammons, who manages to endow playground paraphernalia with the aura of ancient tribal totems, designed the set using found objects (sand, a branch, a tin bucket, a flashing bicycle light, and so on). (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Nov. 30-Dec. 2 at 8 and Dec. 3 at 3. Through Dec. 10.)

"Putti"—In a solo inspired by Dante's Divine Comedy, Peter Cramer makes a pilgrimage from the celestial to the terrestrial. In the opening passage, Cramer, a former technical adviser at Danspace, is lowered by a forty-foot cord from the church ceiling. (Danspace Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Nov. 30 and Dec. 2-3 at 8:30.)

"New Stuff"—Clarinda Mac Low curates an evening of three dances and a twenty-minute musical improvisation. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Nov. 30-Dec. 3 at 9.)

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

Anthrax—They started out on the fringes of New York's hardcore scene, but by 1984, when they started making records, they had acquired a decidedly heavy-metal edge, all flashy guitar solos and falsetto sobs. The quartet achieved a certain distinction in 1991, when they released a rap-metal cover of Public Enemy's "Bring the Noise," complete with Flavor Flav and Chuck D. Now, with "Stomp 442," they're back to banging heads across the land. (Academy, 234 W. 43rd St. 307-7171. Nov. 29 at 8.)

Harvey Fierstein, Julie Halston, and Ann Hampton Callaway—An adults-only evening of cabaret and comedy. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Nov. 29 at 7:30 and 10.)

Chico O'Farrill—This composer and arranger is one of the head honchos of Afro-Cuban jazz; along with Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie, he goosed bebop with Latin rhythms. His recently released "Pure Emotion" proves he's still on top of his game. Recognition is long overdue. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Nov. 30 at 8.)

Tracy Chapman—It's been seven years since "Fast Car" turned this earnest folksinger into an overnight sensation; that damn car must be the bane of her existence. Nevertheless, she continues to make fine records: "New Beginning" is her latest. (Academy. Nov. 30 at 8.)

"The Man from Ipanema"—A salute to the music of Antonio Carlos Jobim, with Branford Marsalis, Herbie Mann, Gilberto Gil, and others. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Nov. 30 at 8.)

Billy Taylor—His playing mirrors his persona: sturdy, erudite, and resolutely mainstream. The epiphanies may be few, but quality is a given. With the melodic trombone tones of Slide Hampton—an excellent match. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Nov. 30 at 7.)

Vernon Reid and Bill Frisell—A Don Byron-curated program of leftist jazz. Frisell and Reid's album of guitar duets, "Smash & Scatteration," was one of the more intriguing releases of the late eighties. With the Dave Douglas Sextet. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 300 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. Dec. 1-2 at 8.)

Fontella Bass—Best known for her 1965 hit "Rescue Me," Bass is a singer with an earthshaking voice. Her most recent record, "No Ways Tired," was packed with organ-driven gospel and blues. (St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 1-718 858-2424. Dec. 1 at 8.)

Wayne Shorter—Two things are true: he's the most important saxophonist of the past thirty years, and his latest recording, "High Life," is a hollow-hearted studio-manufactured dog. Judging from the electrically inclined nature of his current septet, fusion seems to be the catch of the day. Still, any chance to hear his ravishing tenor and soprano is worth taking. Mark Isham, Hollywood's favorite alternative composer, will be the opening act. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Dec. 1 at 8.)

Foo Fighters—Kurt Cobain was probably too nice a guy to snap, "Shut up! You're just the drummer." As it happens, his former Nirvana percussionist, Dave Grohl, actually appears to have a thing or two to say; this is his band, and their songs aren't half bad. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. Dec. 1 at 8.)

Lavender Light—The lesbian-and-gay gospel choir. (Tribeca Performing Arts Center, 199 Chambers St. 346-8510. Dec. 2 at 8.)

Freedy Johnston—Born in Kansas and raised in Hoboken, Johnston has a knack for churning out exacting folk rock with a convincing Midwestern twang; his songs bristle with careful detail and piercing language. His mostly perfect "This Perfect World" captured a misshapen planet inhabited by broken folks pushed to desperate measures. He should know: he sold the family farm to support his career, an experience chronicled on his superior 1992 record, "Can You Fly" (which began with the line "Well, I sold the dirt to feed the band"). (St. Ann's Church. Dec. 2 at 8.)

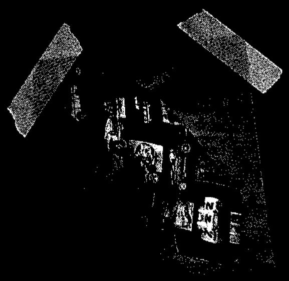
Jazz Nativity—A musical version of the traditional Christmas story, with Lionel Hampton, Tito Puente, and Jon Faddis. Hosted by Charles Kuralt. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Dec. 2 at 3 and Dec. 3 at 7:30.)

CLUBS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Decent sight lines, great greasy food, prodigiously talented waitresses, and a consistent roster of high-quality acts. Nov.

You're sailing along in your Mercedes, and you're not exactly thinking about the steel structure that helps distribute impact energy. The pop-up roll bar that deploys in rollover situations. The ABS system that assists in preventing wheel lockup. Right now, you're just thankful for a new [illegible] design that guards against something really scary—bad hair.



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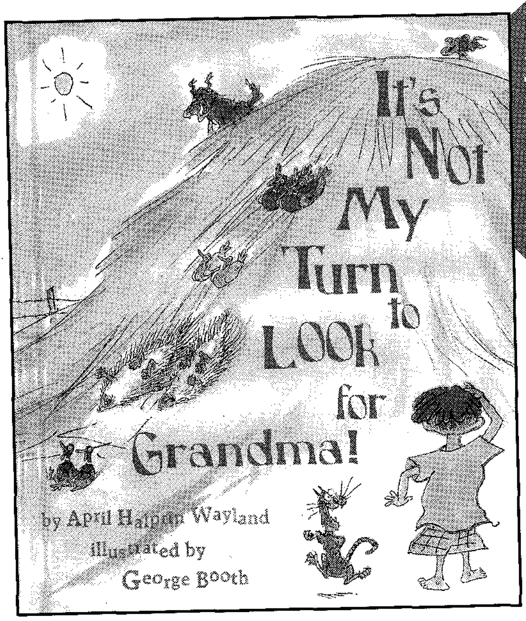
It's Not My Turn to Look for Grandma!
by April Halprin Wayland
illustrated by George Booth

Introduce your children to the most outrageous cartoonist in town!

George Booth teams up with author April Halprin Wayland to create a wacky patch of foot-stomping fun!

It's Not My Turn to Look for Grandma! has "so much pep readers will swear it's been handed down for generations. Read it out loud."
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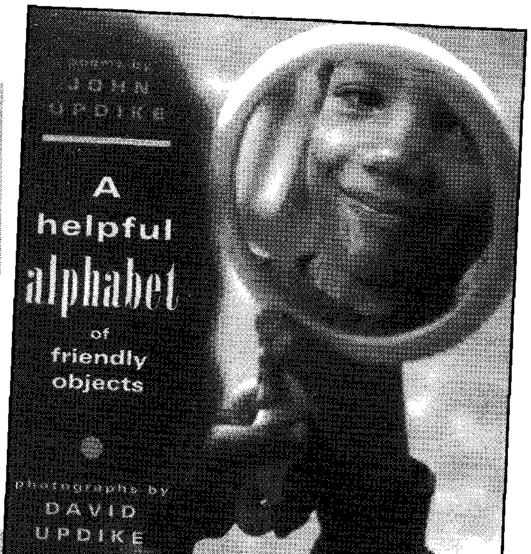
Ages 3-8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An alphabet book filled with poems for children to cherish long after they've learned their ABC's

Alfred A. Knopf Books for Young Readers • New York

29: Singer-songwriter CHERYL WHEELER, whose insights are as sharp as her wit. Her new album, "Mrs. Pinocci's Guitar," is full of the sublime ("Piper") and the ridiculous ("Is It Peace or Is It Prozac?"). With RALPH MC TELL, of "Streets of London" fame.

BROWNIES, 169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (420-8392)—Nov. 30: Robert Mainwaring. Dec. 1: BAILTER SPACE.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—Rock and roll always sounds best in a dump, which may be why this legendary club is still thriving. 44 has the stage on Dec. 2.

CHICAGO B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Dedicated to the music of the Windy City. Nov. 29-30: The Chicago R. & B. Kings.

FEZ, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—A comfortable neo-Moroccan bar hidden inside the Time Café. The downstairs room, where bands perform, is a fine spot to take in a show. Nov. 29: Local tattooed folk hero DANIEL CARTIER. Dec. 1-2: VIC CHESNUTT. The MINGUS BIG BAND still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

IRVING PLAZA, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—This sprawling two-floor establishment has been all things to all people: meeting hall, rock club, jazz club, Off Broadway theatre. Nov. 30: LETTERS TO CLEO. Dec. 2: AQUARIUM RESCUE UNIT. . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday, with sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

KNITTING FACTORY, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Dec. 2: SKELETON KEY.

LUDLOW STREET CAFÉ, 165 Ludlow St. (353-0536)—A modest belowstairs room that looks like a spruced-up tenement apartment. Mondays belong to beat rodeo, a straight-shooting bar band that plays a mixture of country, blues, Dylan, Byrds, Velvets, and various pop curiosities.

MANNY'S CAR WASH, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—Nov. 29: Former barefoot Letterman guitarist HIRAM BULLOCK performs with Letterman bassist WILL LEE. Nov. 30: MATT (GUITAR) MURPHY. Since the early fifties, Murphy has played with the likes of Howlin' Wolf, Junior Parker, and, most notably, Memphis Slim, but it wasn't until 1990 that he released his first solo album, "Way Down South," at the age of sixty-one. He still packs a mean riff.

MATCH, 160 Mercer St. (343-0020)—This hip SoHo *boîte* is the place to be every Monday night, thanks to the SHORTY JACKSON LEGACY BLUES BAND. Dining.

MERCURY LOUNGE, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Dec. 2: The World Famous Blue Jays. Dec. 5: Jeffrey Gaines.

PADDY REILLY'S MUSIC BAR, 519 Second Ave., at 29th St. (686-1210)—BLACK 47 usually plays on Saturdays, and Speir Mor (Gaelic for Big Sky) performs for a hearty following on Fridays. Séisiún—a traditional Irish jam—is on Thursday nights.

LES POULETS, 16 W. 22nd St. (229-2000)—The name may be French, but the music here is Latin: expect salsa, merengue, and, now and then, a cha-cha. Dining.

RAINBOW & STARS, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—Rhythm and blues has arrived in the canny and capable hands of RUTH BROWN (through mid-December). She has assembled a topflight quartet, all of whom play solid R. & B. while she talks about her career triumphs, thanks her doctor, thanks someone who helped pay for her doctor, begs the critics in the audience to give her good reviews, makes allusions to her dress size, her age, and how long it takes her makeup man to do her face, introduces some flamenco dancer sitting ringside, and touches on other smart things and people too numerous to mention. Then she launches into an inspired version of Ellington's "I'm a Lucky So and So"—and it's only the third number. After that come a few standards, a couple of her old hits, an Eric Clapton song, a cut from her Broadway star turn, "Black and Blue," etc. She is talented and true to her art. She hits all her notes, gets all her laughs, is wise and eclectic and vulnerable without being mawkish, and she knows how to put together a real night-club act. An impressive show. Closed Mondays.

S.O.B.'s, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut with a fruit-and-bamboo motif, dedicated to calypso, reggae, and the bossa nova. Lite-jazz sensation **MICHAEL FRANKS** begins a three-night run on Dec. 5. Dining.

SUPPER CLUB, 240 W. 47th St. (921-1940)—The dark, glowering, and frequently brilliant singer **LLOYD COLE** is here Nov. 29. On Nov. 30, a double bill of jazz- and angst-flavored pop with **EVERYTHING BUT THE GIRL** and **MARK EITZEL**. Fourteen years and several fine albums after they met in college, Tracey Thorn and Ben Watt—the stylish duo known as Everything But the Girl—finally hit their stride with "Amplified Heart" (1994), a fantastic piece of work that is now enjoying a second life thanks to a clubby remix of "Missing." With a serious nod to Burt Bacharach, they offer a classy, rose-petal take on the music that's often sneeringly referred to as adult contemporary. Their wistfulness may send some listeners to sleep, but ever so gently, like a perfectly mixed Martini. Eitzel remains, despite his recent excruciatingly awkward opening gig with the Pretenders, one of the finest poets of tenderloin passion and despair since Tom Waits. Though his long-underappreciated Bay Area band, American Music Club, is no more, his acoustic act has the same unfashionable and eccentric sound. His forthcoming solo début, "60 Watt Silver Lining," is full of the grief-gilded heart-on-his-sleeve songwriting that made his work with A.M.C. so riveting.

TRAMPS, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Nov. 30: **ALT**, a new group featuring Tim Finn, formerly of Split Enz and Crowded House. **JERRY JEFF WALKER** (Dec. 1-2) has been flashing that crooked grin for so long that people tend to take him granted, but the Texas urban cowboy (who's originally from the Catskills) just about invented dusty-booted songwriting. Come early for the country singer and former Outlaw **BILLY JOE SHAVER**, whose tunes have been recorded by Waylon Jennings, the Allman Brothers, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Elvis, to name a few.

WEBSTER HALL, 125 E. 11th St. (353-1600)—A byzantine disco wonderland with four floors, a coffee shop, and a wig boutique. Wednesday is drag night. Psychedelic Thursdays feature grunge acts and cheap beer.

WETLANDS, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Nov. 29: A birthday benefit for Abbie Hoffman.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

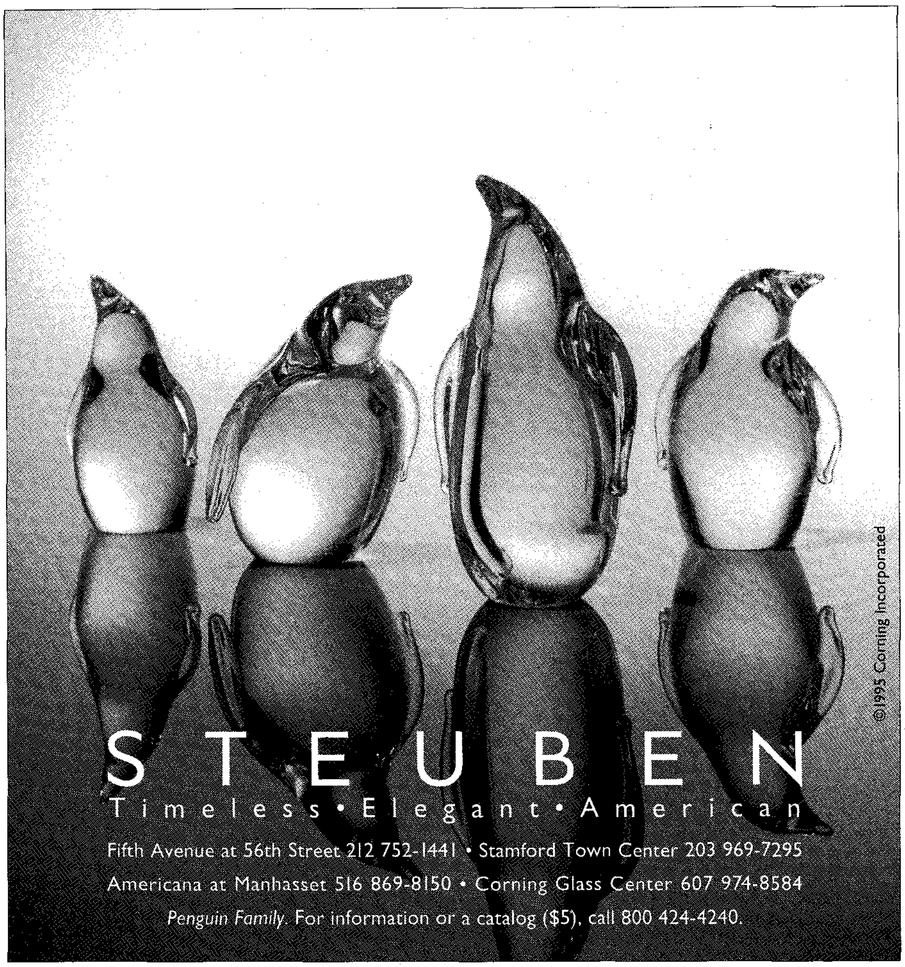
ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Vocalist **ANDREA MARCOVICCI** is currently at work in the woody nook known as the Oak Room. Dining.

BIRDLAND, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—Dec. 1-2: Is **VALERY PONOMAREV** the greatest hard-bop trumpeter to emerge from Russia, or are there other nascent Lee Morgans somewhere on the steppes? Only time will tell. Dining.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Dec. 3: Rachelle Ferrell and her jazz trio. A double bill featuring the **JAMES MOODY** quartet and the **JOSHUA REDMAN** quartet is in the house beginning Dec. 5. Saxophonist Moody is one of the greats, while Redman may one day be one of the greats. In the meantime, the well-hyped youngster better watch his back or the elder statesman with the whizzing tenor and the deadly sense of humor will devour him like an appetizer. Dining.

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—On any given night, and well into the morning, one or another of New York's many formidable pianists can be found here. The **BOBBY WATSON** trio begins a weeklong run on Dec. 4. Dining.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, window-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less enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and, through New Year's Eve, the great **BOBBY SHORT**. A fixture at the Carlyle, he can still spin an Ira Gershwin lyric with all the sophistication, humor, and pathos it deserves. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** is in attendance.

Five Spot, 4 W. 31st St. (631-0100)—Dec. 1-2: Hilton Ruiz with Dave Valentin. Dining.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through Dec. 3: the **AHMAD JAMAL** quartet. Instead of mellowing with time, Jamal keeps getting more eccentric. A charming minimalist back in the fifties, the pianist has metamorphosed into a verbose extrovert with his own game plan of stop-and-start rhythms, mood-swing digressions, and catch-me-if-you-can shenanigans with his sidemen. What holds all this perversely fascinating stuff together is technique. **MARCUS ROBERTS** grabs a handful of keys on Dec. 5.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Nov. 29-Dec. 2: Piano and bass with **LEE MUSIKER** and **JAY LEONHART.**

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Nov. 29: **ROBIN EUBANKS.** Keyboardist and tenor-horn player **DJANGO BATES,** best known for his work with the British band Loose Tubes, swings by on Nov. 30.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Through Dec. 3: the **BEN RILEY** quartet. A drummer with a gorgeous touch and fastidious taste, Riley leaves his mark on any band he works with; two classic examples are Thelonious Monk's mid-sixties groups and the vibrant Monk tribute band Sphere. For his own gig, he's left the horns behind and brought in vibes and guitar, played by Steve Nelson and Ted Dunbar, respectively. The **DANILO PEREZ** quartet takes the reins on Dec. 5. Perez's piano work has what Jelly Roll Morton identified some seventy years ago as jazz's secret weapon: "the Spanish tinge." Perez is as technically dexterous and harmonically astute as anyone on the scene, and few of his peers have his gift for rhythm.

Tavern on the Green, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—This legendary tourist haven makes serious jazz fans welcome in the Chestnut Room, which resembles a hunting lodge and is every bit as over-the-top as the rest of the establishment.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The behemoths of the tenor sax—Don Byas, Gene Ammons, David Murray—hover above **JAMES CARTER** (in through Dec. 3), whispering their secrets in his ear. A gifted eclectic, Carter also takes on soprano and alto sax, the bass clarinet, and the flute. He's still sorting through his influences, but his work screams confidence. Great things are expected. Beginning Dec. 5: the **BOBBY HUTCHERSON** quintet. It took Hutcherson to translate the modernist grammar of sixties jazz for the vibraphone. He's at his best when he glides into the spare, mysterious ruminations perfected on such classics as Eric Dolphy's "Out to Lunch," but he also loves to strut his piston-mallet technique on up-tempo numbers. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

Visiones, 125 Macdougal St., at W. 3rd St. (673-5576)—**RAY DRUMMOND,** New York's most reliable bassist, is in Nov. 29-Dec. 2. When you lay down the kind of shag carpet that Drummond regularly does, anything on top sounds good. Dining.

Zinc Bar, 90 W. Houston St. (477-8337)—Nov. 29: The **RAVI COLTRANE** trio. John Coltrane's son hasn't made life easy for himself by taking up the tenor sax. Still, his steady gig with his dad's old teammate, the drummer Elvin Jones, has turned him into a sharp soloist with a genial approach of his own.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—Through Dec. 2: Guitar and bass with **GENE BERTONCINI** and **MICHAEL MOORE.** Dining.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Rembrandt/Not Rembrandt." Through Jan. 7. . . . ¶ "Howard Hodgkin: Paintings 1975-1995." "Bloomsbury tea trays" is the London critic Brian Sewell's snappish description of this preëminent British artist's luxuriantly decorative abstract paintings. You don't have to share Sewell's disdain to discern a grain of truth in his words: Hodgkin's exuberant patterns and electric colors do bring to mind the florid arabesques favored by such Bloomsbury lights as Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant, and Dora Carrington. Well installed and ravishingly lit, the paintings seem to glow with an inner fire; the retrospective goes a long way toward solidifying Hodgkin's position as a torchbearer for what is left of abstractionism. Through Jan. 28. . . . ¶ "Goya in the Metropolitan Museum of Art." Through Dec. 31. . . . ¶ Black-and-white photographs by Hiroshi Sugimoto, chosen from three different series: "Seascapes," "Motion Pictures," and "Hall of Thirty-three Bays." Through Jan. 14. . . . ¶ "John Singleton Copley in America," seventy-five portraits of affluent Bostonians and New Yorkers, done before the artist packed up for London in 1775. Through Jan. 7. . . . ¶ "American Schoolgirl Needlework," fifty samplers and needlework pictures made between 1740 and 1850. Through Feb. 18. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

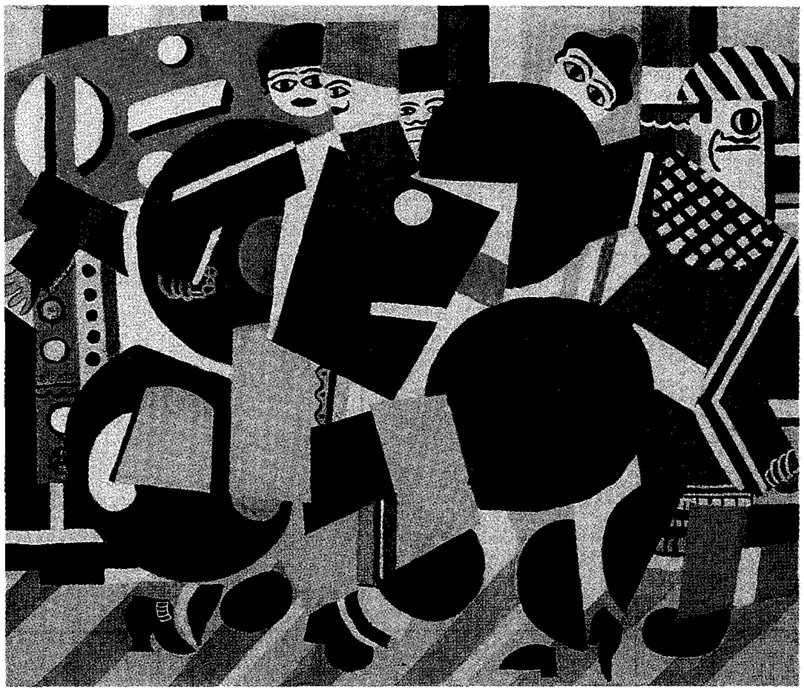
Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Piet Mondrian: 1872-1944," a hundred and sixty paintings and drawings, and a re-creation of the artist's last studio. Through Jan. 23. . . . ¶ "Alfred Stieglitz at Lake George," a large trove of photographs from the twenties and thirties, many never before exhibited, taken at Stieglitz's upstate retreat. Through Jan. 2. . . . ¶ Uta Barth, Joseph Bartscherer, Ulrich Görlich, and Eric Rondepierre have contributed new photographs and site-specific installations to "New Photography 11." Through Jan. 9. . . . ¶ Carrie Mae Weems's installation for the "Projects" series combines photographs, texts, wallpaper, and decorative objects. Through Jan. 2. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Claes Oldenburg: An Anthology." Through Jan. 21. . . . ¶ "Joel-Peter Witkin," a mid-career retrospective of the photographer's astonishing and horrifying œuvre. Through Jan. 14. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"Beat Culture and the New America: 1950-1965," a loving, ambitious tribute to the angry young men of the era. The survey attempts to recapture the last period in America when it was still possible to be really shocking. Curator Lisa Phillips has done an amazing job of tracking down third-rate work by forgotten artists associated with the Beats, and she has enlivened the show with some unfamiliar paintings by such distinguished contemporaries as Rauschenberg, Rivers, and Kline. However, she doesn't really solve the perennial problem of literature-based exhibitions: books in glass cases have little to say to people who haven't read them. Yet there are lively paintings—doodles, really—by Kerouac and Burroughs and a family-snapshot album of the movement by Ginsberg. Anyone who was a teen-ager during those years will feel the numinous pull of the manuscript of "Howl" and of the Teletype-paper roll on which Kerouac typed "On the Road." Through Feb. 4. . . . ¶ "Robert Frank: Moving Out," a large retrospective of the photographer's career. Through Feb. 11. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—"To the Ends of the Earth" includes fossils, field equipment, maps, and memorabilia from fifteen of the museum's fossil-hunting expeditions—from Medicine Bow, Wyoming, in 1901, to the current Gobi Desert digs. Through Dec. 10. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"Worlds Seen and Imagined," an impeccably researched, sumptuously installed exhibition of Japanese screens on loan from the Idemitsu Museum of Arts, in Tokyo, spans the history of these gilded visions from the fif-



A curtain design by Fernand Léger, in "Paris Modern: The Swedish Ballet 1920-25," at the Fashion Institute of Technology.

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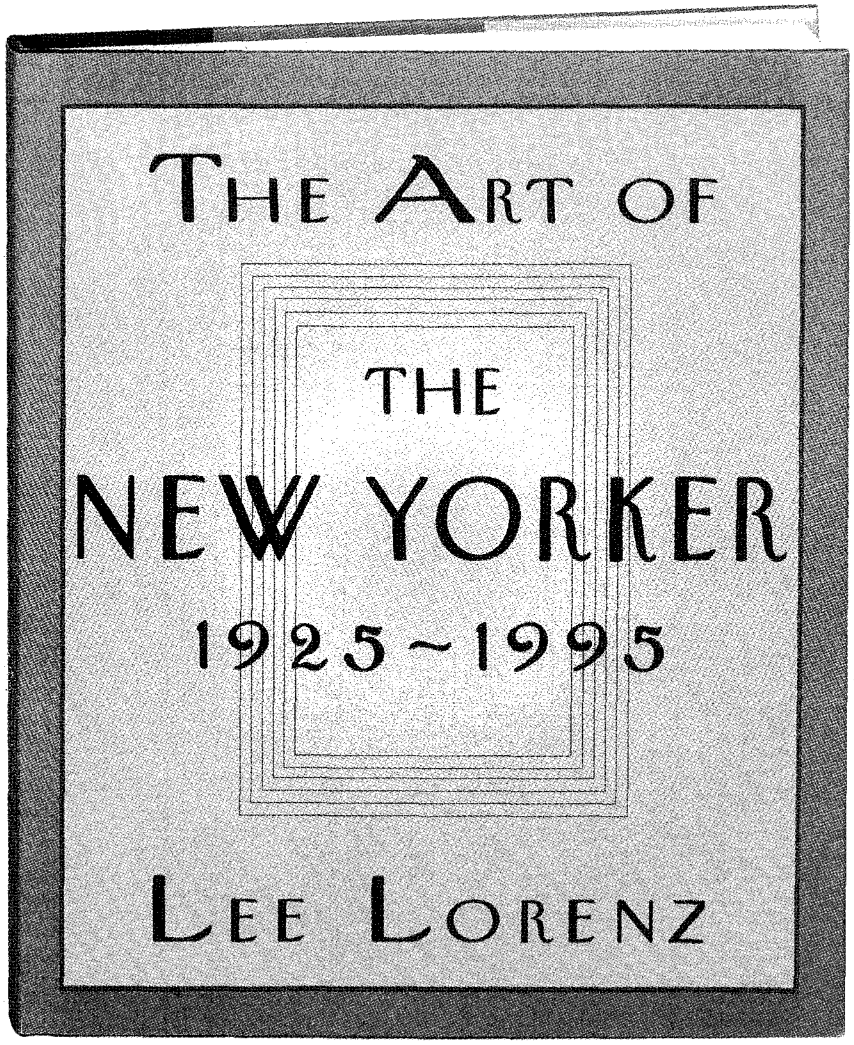

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teenth through the early nineteenth century. Part two runs through Jan. 7. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8; Sundays, noon to 5.)

China Institute, 125 E. 65th St.—The graphic expressiveness of the Chinese pictograph is examined in "Abstraction and Expression in Chinese Calligraphy." Through Dec. 21. (Open Mondays through Saturdays, 10 to 5, and Tuesday evenings until 8; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Fashion Institute of Technology, Seventh Ave. at 27th St.—"Paris Modern: The Swedish Ballet 1920-25." The Ballets Suédois was an avant-garde hothouse nourished on the contributions of de Chirico, Picabia, Cocteau, Léger, Cole Porter, René Clair, and many others. The two hundred and fifty objects here—drawings, costume and set designs, stage models, photographs, and two full-size backdrops—admirably document the company's short, fiery history. Through Jan. 13. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, noon to 8, and Saturdays, 10 to 5.)

Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St.—"The Butterfly and the Bat: Whistler and Montesquiou." At the center of this show's universe is James McNeill Whistler's 1892 portrait "Arrangement in Black and Gold: Comte Robert de Montesquiou-Fezensac." Many items on loan—paintings, drawings, photographs, decorative art, and more—illuminate the complex relationship between the American expatriate artist and the French poet, critic, and topflight dandy. Through Jan. 28. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St.—Sixty lacquer boxes from the sixteenth century through the eighteenth. Through Jan. 14. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 5.)

Museum of American Folk Art, Columbus Ave. at 65th St.—"Norwegian Folk Art: The Migration of a Tradition" features Viking-style tankards, massive porridge containers, ornate dowry trunks, elaborate ceremonial coverlets, and examples of rosemaling (vivid floral painting on wood). Through Jan. 7. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11:30 to 7:30.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Edvard Munch and Harald Sohlberg: Landscapes of the Mind." The season's most beautiful and exciting show presents a conspectus of the work of two turn-of-the-century Norwegian painters. Munch is represented by many of his finest canvases, including the mesmerizing "Madonna," and "Vampire," a lamplit scene of a couple kissing which virtually tingles with horror. "The Scream" is here, too, in lithograph form. Sohlberg's vision was more uplifting than harrowing; he specialized in mountain landscapes at dusk (when the arctic horizon was ablaze) and afterward. He executed "Winter Night in the Mountains" in the dead of night, using an acetylene torch to keep his paints (and, presumably, himself) from freezing. Most of the paintings, which are on loan from public and private collections in Norway, have never before been exhibited in this country. Through Jan. 14. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 11:30 to 5:30; Friday evenings until 8, with no admission charge after 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"Flights of Fancy," thirteen (of course) drawings by Charles Addams, most of which appeared in these pages.... ¶ Part two of "The Collecting Adventure, 1895-1995" examines the way the library has preserved rare sacred texts, original manuscripts of great literary value, and early printed books. Through Feb. 3. (Open Mondays, and Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Peter Halley—Perhaps it's fitting that this leading exponent of Neo-Geo is exhibiting his smart and calculated abstractions in the same gallery that shows Mondrian: reductivist modernism comes full circle. The three paintings on display are imposing, color-coördinated, and devastatingly chic. Through Dec. 9. (Janis, 110 W. 57th St.)

Sigmar Polke—Paintings from the late sixties through 1980 by one of the creators of Germany's answer to Pop art, capitalist realism. Here he experiments with unusual materials and often achieves mordantly witty effects; in "Dürer-hare" (1970), for example, he renders Albrecht Dürer's famous beast in outline, using elastic bands on wood. Through Jan. 6. (Werner, 21 E. 67th St. Open Mondays.)

Tony Smith (1912-80)—A rare show of works on paper in a variety of mediums, including graphite, watercolor, gouache, ink, and collage, by the late-blooming minimalist sculptor (he had been an architect by profession). Through Jan. 13. (Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St.)

Saul Steinberg—Drawings and "tables," from the forties through the eighties, by the *New Yorker* artist. The tables are relief assemblages incorporating the artist's tools: pencils, paint brushes, palettes, rubber stamps, etc., all mounted on wood. Through Dec. 9. (Baumgold, 128 E. 72nd St.)

DC Moore Gallery—Grace Borgenicht retired in October; the founders of this new gallery in her former space, late of Borgenicht and Midtown Payson, have mounted an opening show of paintings, sculptures, and photographs by artists whose work has regularly been exhibited at those galleries: Paul Cadmus, Janet Fish, Mary Frank, Robert Kushner, Jacob Lawrence, George Platt Lynes, Jared French, and others. Through Dec. 30. (724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Short List—hannelore baron, Mathes, 41 E. 57th St. Through Dec. 29.... **alice dalton brown,** Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St. Through Dec. 16.... **st. clair cemin,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. Through Jan. 6.... **george grosz,** Soufer, 1015 Madison Ave., at 78th St. Through Dec. 22.... **ana mercedes hoyos,** Associated American Artists, 20 W. 57th St. Through Dec. 7.... **luis jimenez,** ACA, 41 E. 57th St. Through Dec. 9.... **medrie mac phee,** Baldacci, 41 E. 57th St. Through Dec. 16.... **gwynn murrill,** Washburn, 20 W. 57th St. Through Dec. 23.... **darragh park,** De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St. Through Dec. 16.... **beverly pepper,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. Through Dec. 2.... **doug safranek,** Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St. Through Dec. 23.... **david salle,** Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. Through Dec. 2.... **jonathan silver,** Sculpture Center, 167 E. 69th St. Through Dec. 23.... **frank stella,** Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. Through Jan. 6. Also at Castelli, 420 West Broadway. Through Dec. 16.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Al Hansen (1927-95)—More than fifty pieces, from the early sixties on, by the "happenings" pioneer and all-around enfant terrible, who died in June. Through Dec. 2. (Gracie Mansion Gallery, 54 St. Marks Pl. Open Thursdays through Saturdays, 2 to 6.)

Karen Kilimnik—"Witchcraft, the Craft," a series of small, luscious, witty oil paintings with elements from Gainsborough and Reynolds, Calvin Klein ad campaigns, and such antiquated Pop taffy as "Bewitched" and Polanski's "The Fearless Vampire Killers," by a young artist with an enchantingly twisted sensibility. Through Dec. 22. (303 Gallery, 89 Greene St.)

Brice Marden—A large group of new paintings and drawings by a first-rank abstractionist. Marden's lines, thicker and lusher than ever, swell and buckle in an amorphous space; whereas previously they kept clear of the edges, now they seem to cling to the perimeter as if seeking refuge from an unstructured picture plane. Through Jan. 14. (Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.... ¶ A show of Marden's drawings is at Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St., through Dec. 2.)

Tom Nozkowski / R. Buckminster Fuller—A gifted painter raids the modernist icebox to create

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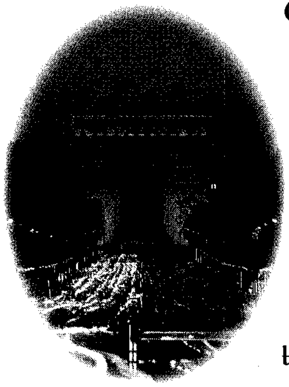

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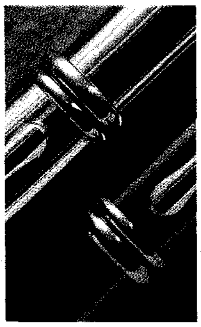

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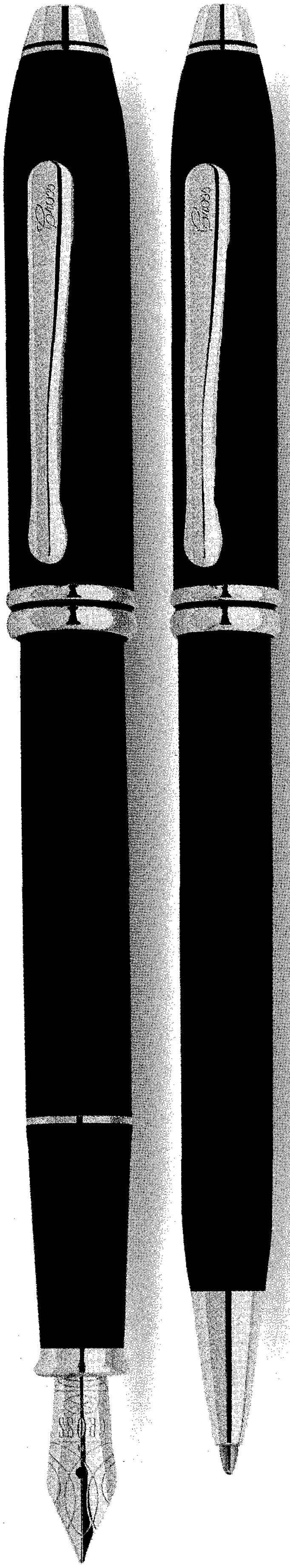

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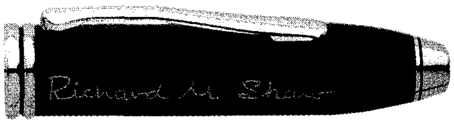

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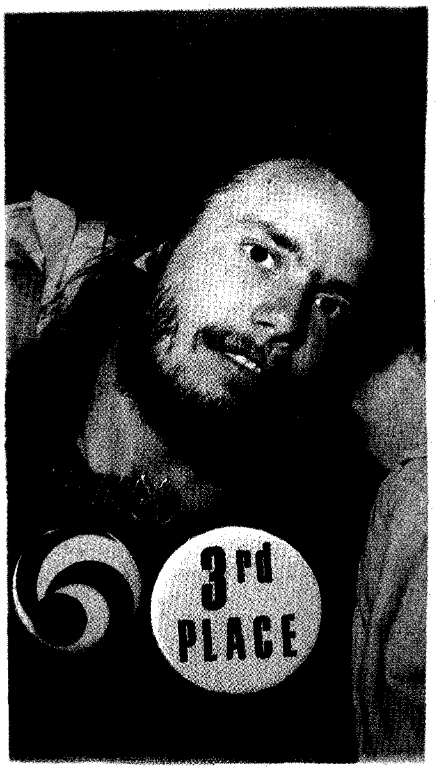
an autobiography in oils: twenty small abstracts based on images and events associated with the hundred-mile stretch of the Hudson River Valley (from the Lower East Side to points north) where he has spent his life. Nozkowski deftly deploys bold primary colors, Constructivist hard edges, scumbled pigments, and boogie-woogie polygons; what is most remarkable is not how well he does it but how stoutly he has kept his faith in modernism. / Architectural drawings and blueprints of geodesic domes by the visionary architect. Through Dec. 2. (Protetch, 560 Broadway.)

Richard Prince—The master of the postmodernist put-on tries his hand at real art—and it suits him. In this group of large paintings, Prince juxtaposes his trademark bad jokes with cell-like enclosures of computer-generated doodles and splashy Abstract Expressionist brushstrokes that overlap and tumble to the corners of the canvas like sloppy dominoes. Imagine Cy Twombly playing Grossinger's. Through Dec. 22. (Gladstone, 99 Greene St.)

Gerhard Richter—A near-retrospective of paintings emphasizing gray, soft-focus images based on photographs from the early sixties, by a great German artist who defies categorization. In works such as "Administrative Building" (an utterly uninflected portrait of a squat government pile) and in paintings that depict groups of provocatively posed nude adolescent girls, he comes as close as any artist ever has to pure ambiguity: does he like the building or hate it? are the girls supposed to be sexy? We'll never know. An important exhibition. Through Jan. 13. (Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St. . . . ¶ Richter's comprehensive "Atlas" is at Dia Center for the Arts, 548 W. 22nd St. Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)



Self-portrait by Richard Prince (Gladstone).

Sean Scully—Four new oil paintings from the stripe master: big and handsome, but should art really be in such monumentally good taste? Through Dec. 16. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

Annina Nosei Gallery—Nosei has moved from SoHo to Chelsea and reopened with a group show of gallery artists, including Julio Galan, Stephen Mueller, Shirin Neshat, Jenny Watson, and Manuel Ocampo. Through Dec. 30. (530 W. 22nd St. Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Short List—**BETH B,** P.P.O.W, 532 Broadway. Through Dec. 22. . . . **FRANCESCO CLEMENTE,** Blum, 99 Wooster St. Through Jan. 27. . . . **BRUCE CONNER,** Marcus, 578 Broadway. Through Dec. 22. . . . **JACQUELINE HUMPHRIES,** Greene Naftali, 526 W. 26th St. Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6, Sundays, noon to 6; through Jan. 14. . . . **PRUDENCIO IRAZABAL,** Shainman, 560 Broadway. Through Dec. 23. . . . **RICHARD KALINA,** Lennon, Weinberg, 560 Broadway. Through Dec. 22. . . . **MALCOLM MORLEY,** Klein, 40 Wooster St. Through Jan. 6. . . . **MARTIN MULL** and **WILLY HEEKS,** Beitzel, 102 Prince St. Through Dec. 22. . . . **DAVID SCHER,** Tilton, 49 Greene St. Through Dec. 23. . . . **CHRISTIAN SCHUMANN** and **SYLVIE FLEURY,** Postmasters, 80 Greene St. Through Dec. 23.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

Christie's—Nov. 29: The annual sale of Native American art includes holdings from the collections of the Continental Insurance Corporation (rich in southwestern items) and Peggy Au Schatz (notably a two-thousand-year-old Okvik walrus-ivory female figure—probably pregnant—which has been on loan to the Detroit Institute of Arts for more than a decade). . . . ¶ Nov. 30: American paintings, by Glackens, O'Keeffe, and others. On the same day, auctions of Lalique collectibles and of American historical documents, including the original eighteen-page Proclamation of the Louisiana Purchase. . . . ¶ Dec. 1: Mr. and Mrs. Frank Sinatra recently disposed of a mansion outside Palm Springs, consigning its contents to Christie's, where groupies may bid on the Chairman of the Board's Bösendorfer grand piano, his 1976 Jaguar (her wedding gift to him), an E-Z-Go golf cart inscribed "Ol' Blue Eyes" on one side and "Lady Blue Eyes" on the other, as well as American paintings (by William Merritt Chase, Childe Hassam, Andrew Wyeth, and others), vintage radios, a slot machine—even an outdoor mailbox stencilled "Sinatra," sure to confuse the postal worker in your life. (Park Ave. at 59th St. 546-1000.)

Christie's East—Nov. 29: Collectible musical instruments and pop memorabilia, including a Miles Davis flugelhorn, guitars owned by Bob Dylan and Jimi Hendrix, and art works by John Lennon and Jerry Garcia. (219 E. 67th St. 546-1000.)

Sotheby's—Nov. 29: American paintings from the collection of the screenwriters Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett, including Hopper's "French Six-Day Bicycle Rider." . . . ¶ Nov. 30: Antiquities—Assyrian, Roman, and so on—from the Perls collection. . . . ¶ Dec. 1: Lalique glasswork and jewelry. . . . ¶ Dec. 2: Art Nouveau ceramics and furniture, with striking examples by Guimard, Gallé, and Tiffany. . . . ¶ Dec. 5: Jewelry, including a suite of gold-and-citrine pieces worn by Joan Crawford in "When Ladies Meet." (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

William Doyle—Nov. 29 at 10: An auction of American decorative arts and furniture, including several Philadelphia Chippendale pieces. . . . At 4: Victorian majolica, with an emphasis on examples by Minton, George Jones, and Wedgwood. (175 E. 87th St. 427-2730.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Ansel Adams (1902-84)—Stately, exquisite moonrises and sunrises from the forties, photographed in the American West. Through Dec. 2. (Danziger, 130 Prince St.)

Ralston Crawford (1906-78)—Crawford was well known for his linear, near-abstract paintings of a narrow range of subjects: grain elevators, the Third Avenue El, lobster pots, and the seafaring life. He also took photographs throughout his career; vintage black-and-white images showing details of his usual subject matter are on display. Through Dec. 30. (Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St.)

Bruce Davidson—Powerful black-and-white photographs of teeming activity and precious solitude in Central Park. In these panoramic, often wide-angle views (on display in a hermetic, carpeted gallery), frissons abound: you can sense the beat of the Rollerbladers' music; touch taut, sweaty skin; feel a blizzard's cold in your bones—a range of tactility you would more readily expect from color work. It's all bound together with an incisive social-documentary vision: Davidson treats people, animals, and the landscape with evenhanded respect. Through Dec. 9. (Burden, 20 E. 23rd St.)

Elliott Erwitt—A retrospective of prints by the man who developed a subjective documentary style known as social-landscape photography. Through Jan. 6. (Houk Friedman, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St.)

O. Winston Link—Two shows chart the veteran photographer's obsession with the last American steam trains; the pictures in both were taken between 1955 and 1960. At Mann (42 E. 76th St.), his well-known black-and-white images of the Norfolk and Western Railway get a restrained display. Exact, reverent description is Link's strong point. Many of the night views were lit with elaborate banks of high-key flashes, and they have a pleasing mise-en-scène effect. But the daylight shots of the trains crawling or steaming through the rocky Virginia countryside are more affecting. Through Dec. 16. . . . ¶ At Danziger (130 Prince St.), little-known color photographs of the same subjects, on view for the first time. These images are much more bucolic in tone. The trains are often shown, at a distance, traversing valleys, rolling past backwater houses and clotheslines, each looking for all the world like The Little Engine That Could. Through Dec. 2.

El Lissitzky (1890-1941)—Photographs, photomontages, and collages by the Russian Suprematist and Constructivist. Through Dec. 15. (Schickler, 52 E. 76th St.)

Esko Männikkö—The Finnish photographer's first solo show abroad. His colorful, often claustrophobic portraits of men alone in their up-country homes exude a melancholic humor that threatens to dissipate but never does. And he raises the stakes with decorative old frames that are in various states of glamorous decay. Through Dec. 6. (Morris Healy, 530 W. 22nd St. Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6.)

"Frida Unmasked"—Portraits of the Mexican painter Frida Kahlo, taken by family members, close friends, and lovers, including Lola and Manuel Alvarez Bravo, Nickolas Muray, and Diego Rivera. Through Jan. 13. (Throckmorton, 153 E. 61st St.)

"The Hungarian Circle: 1916-1940"—A two-gallery show of vintage photographs and collages by trailblazers (Kertész, Brassaï, Moholy-Nagy, Munkacsi, Capa) and more obscure artists (Pal Angelo, Imre Kinszki, Karoly Escher, Josef Pesci). Through Dec. 30. (Greenberg and Gallery 292, 120 Wooster St.)

International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St.—"Feeling the Spirit: Searching the World for the People of Africa," twenty years of photographs by *Times* staff photographer Chester Higgins, Jr. Through Jan. 8. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Short List—**craig barber** and **marshall**, Rice, 325 W. 11th St. Open Thursdays through Saturdays, 1 to 6, Sundays, 1 to 7; through Dec. 30. . . . **kay simmon blumberg**, Borden, 560 Broadway. Through Dec. 21. . . . **patrick demarchelier**, Shafrazi, 119 Wooster St. Through Dec. 2. . . . **john dugdale**, Wessel O'Connor, 60 Thomas St. Opens at noon; through Jan. 20. . . . **herbert matter**, Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway. Through Dec. 1. . . . **jerry n. uelsmann**, Witkin, 415 West Broadway. Through Dec. 9.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim Museum, and the Whitney Museum of American Art.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Heavenly Lengths

THE "Messiah" season opens this week with three performances, each offering what purports to be the complete oratorio. The notion of a complete "Messiah" is, of course, moot, given Handel's perpetual revisions, but you can rest assured that no self-respecting "Messiah" will clock in at less than two and a half hours (intermissions not included). Bach's "Christmas Oratorio" also makes a welcome appearance this week, thanks to the Choral Symphony Society and Cantata Singers. The composer intended the six cantatas to be performed separately during the thirteen days from Christmas through Epiphany; this audience gets the whole shebang in one sitting—all one hundred and forty glorious minutes. (That's child's play for the Wagnerites who will be sitting through six hours of "Die Meistersinger" at the Met.)

Even instrumental concerts are protracted this week. The Orpheus Chamber Orchestra will play all six of Bach's "Brandenburg" Concertos in one evening. But the most extraordinary marathon is surely the Emerson String Quartet's traversal of Bartók's complete quartets: the three-and-three-quarter-hour running time (including two intermissions) of these six intense masterpieces is enough to tax even the hardiest constitution.

(The box-office number for Alice Tully Hall is 875-5050, and for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800.)

HOLIDAY MUSIC

Chanticleer—The men's chamber choir offers a wide-ranging program of holiday music, from Renaissance motets to recent arrangements of spirituals. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. In the Temple of Dendur, Dec. 2 at 6:30 and 8:30. . . . ¶ In the Medieval Sculpture Hall, Dec. 3 at 6:30 and 8:30.)

Choral Symphony Society and Cantata Singers—David Labovitz directs all six cantatas of Bach's "Christmas Oratorio." (Christ & St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. Dec. 3 at 2. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

BachWorks—Richard Erickson leads the choir, instrumentalists, and vocal soloists in a pair of Magnificats—one by Schütz, the other by Bach. (St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, 315 W. 22nd St. Dec. 3 at 5. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

Handel's "Messiah"—Dec. 4 at 8: Dennis Keene directs the Ascension Chorus and Orchestra. (Church of the Ascension, Fifth Ave. at 10th St. 254-8553.) . . . ¶ Dec. 5-6 at 7:30: Kent Tritle leads the Choir and Orchestra of St. Ignatius Loyola, with soprano Karen Krueger, mezzo-soprano Jennifer Lane, tenor Philip Anderson, and bass Arizeder Urreiztieta. (Park Ave. at 84th St. 288-3588.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**rise and fall of the city of mahagonny**, with Teresa Stratas, Helga Dernesch, Gary Lakes, Kenneth Riegel, Timothy Noble, and Jan-Hendrik Rootering; conducted by James Levine. In English. (Nov. 29 at 8.) . . . With Sheri Greenawald

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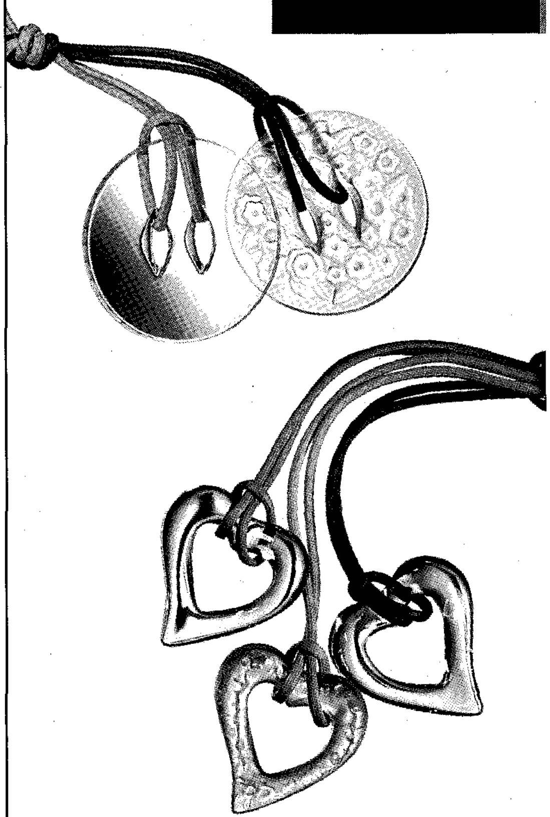

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instead of Ms. Stratas. (Dec. 2 at 8.) . . . IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA, with Jennifer Larmore, Richard Croft, Roberto Frontali, Claudio Desderi, and Mr. Rootering; Adam Fischer. (Nov. 30 at 8.) . . . UN BALLO IN MASCHERA, with Deborah Voigt, Elizabeth Norberg-Schulz, Barbara Dever, Francisco Araiza, and Leo Nucci; Mark Elder. (Dec. 1 at 8.) . . . With Dolora Zajick instead of Ms. Dever. (Dec. 5 at 7:30.) . . . DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE, with Joan Rodgers, Sally Wolf, Deon van der Walt, Mark Oswald, and Hans Sotin; John Keenan. (Dec. 2 at 1:30.) . . . DIE MEISTERSINGER VON NÜRNBERG, with Karita Mattila, Ben Heppner, Lars Magnusson, Bernd Weikl, Hermann Prey, and Mr. Rootering; Mr. Levine. (Dec. 4 at 6.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall, Yuri Temirkanov conducting. Nov. 29 at 6:45: An hour-long Rush Hour Concert for the after-work crowd, consisting of Ravel's "Mother Goose Suite" and Rachmaninoff's "Symphonic Dances." . . . ¶ Nov. 30 and Dec. 2 at 8; Dec. 1 at 2; and Dec. 5 at 7:30: Rimsky-Korsakov's "Russian Easter Festival Overture," Ravel's "Mother Goose Suite," and Rachmaninoff's "Symphonic Dances." (875-5030.)

Jupiter Symphony—Ann Schein is the soloist in Beethoven's Piano Concertos No. 4 and No. 5. Jens Nygaard conducts. (Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, 152 W. 66th St. Dec. 4 at 2 and 7 and Dec. 5 at 8. For information about tickets, call 799-1259.)

Orpheus Chamber Orchestra—The conductorless ensemble performs all six of Bach's "Brandenburg" Concertos. (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 4 at 7.)

RECITALS

Guarneri Quartet—The foursome offers Haydn's G-Minor String Quartet (Op. 74, No. 3) and Beethoven's C-Major Quartet (Op. 59, No. 3); John Browning assists in Brahms's C-Minor Piano Quartet. (Alice Tully Hall. Nov. 29 at 8.)

Bargemusic—Presenting Debussy's Violin Sonata; Hindemith's Double Bass Sonata; Jon Deak's Trio for Double Bass, Violin, and Piano; and Schubert's "Trout" Quintet. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Nov. 30 at 7:30 and Dec. 3 at 4.)

Essential Music—The modern-music group revives two forgotten scores by Edgard Varèse: his "Étude for Chorus, Percussion, and Piano" (1947) and "Dance for Burgess" (1949). The latter was composed for a Broadway show involving the actor and director Burgess Meredith but never made it in; a jaunty number atypical of its composer, the "Dance" here receives what is thought to be its première. Works by Paul Bowles and Peter Garland complete the progam. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Dec. 1 at 8.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—The chamber players mark Toru Takemitsu's sixty-fifth birthday by performing his piano trio "Between Tides" and flute solo "Itinerante," as well as works by Western composers who influenced his style—Debussy, Messiaen, and Schoenberg; featuring flutist Judith Pearce, clarinettist David Shifrin, pianist Peter Serkin, and the Orion String Quartet. (Alice Tully Hall. Dec. 1 at 8 and Dec. 3 at 5.) . . . ¶ The Society's "Music of Our Time" series opens with Takemitsu's "Between Tides" and works by Messiaen, Judith Shatin, Christopher Culpo, and David Diamond. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Dec. 4 at 8.)

Robert McDuffie—Though hardly a household name, this violinist has earned a reputation as a musician's musician. In this recital—his first New York appearance in three years—he performs sonatas by Beethoven (his Fourth) and Enescu (his Third), as well as Tobias Picker's "Invisible Lilacs" and Bartók's Two Rhapsodies (1928). Pianist Charles Abramovic assists. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Dec. 2 at 8.)

Emerson String Quartet—The foursome, which owed much of its early renown to its interpretations and recordings of Bartók, plays all six of the composer's quartets. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Dec. 3 at 2.)

Garrick Ohlsson—The pianist continues his survey of Chopin's complete piano music with a program that includes the Scherzos No. 1 and No. 4 and a selection of waltzes, mazurkas, and nocturnes. (Alice Tully Hall. Dec. 3 at 2.)

St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble—Presenting chamber works by Bach. (Cantor Auditorium, Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway. Dec. 3 at 2. For information about tickets, call 212-840-7470. The program will be repeated on Dec. 6 at 8, at Weill Recital Hall.)

New York Philharmonic Ensembles—Members of the orchestra play Bach's G-Minor Trio Sonata, Hindemith's String Trio No. 1 (Op. 34), and Brahms's Piano Quintet. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Dec. 3 at 3.)

Pedja Muzijevic—The pianist performs Haydn's F-Minor Variations, Janáček's "Sonata October 1, 1905," Schumann's "Kreisleriana," and works by Liszt and Oliver Knussen. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. Dec. 3 at 5.)

Eugenia Zukerman and Anthony Newman—The flutist and the fortepianist, in works by Haydn, Beethoven, Hummel, and Mendelssohn. (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 930-0571. Dec. 5 at 6.)

Dmitri Hvorostovsky—The Siberian baritone performs songs by Rachmaninoff and Georgy Sviridov (his cycle "Russia Cast Adrift"), with pianist Mikhail Arkadiev. (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 5 at 8.)

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ABOVE AND BEYOND

All in the Family—This Sunday, you can bring photos of the relatives, fabric swatches from the old homestead, leftover madeleines from a legendary meal—even family members themselves—to the Brooklyn Historical Society, where Marcy Arlin and Mary Chang, from the Immigrants' Theatre Project, will help visitors turn domestic legends into dramatic monologues and stage presentations. Acting experience is not required. (128 Pierrepont St. For more information, call 1-718 624-0890. Dec. 3 at 1.)

Memorial Day—Day Without Art began, seven years ago, as a way to call attention to the number of artists dying from AIDS-related causes; the effort continues this year with the shrouding of art works in museums and the ongoing documentation of work by artists with HIV/AIDS. On Dec. 1, at noon: Actors Cherry Jones, Ellen Burstyn, Debra Monk, and Zoë Caldwell, among others, read names from the Book of Remembrance, a roll call of those who have died since Day Without Art started. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ At 7: Marchers assemble for songs and speeches at the arch in Washington Square Park, then light candles and head south on LaGuardia Place and down West Broadway to City Hall Park. . . . ¶ From 7:45 to 8: The skyline goes dark as theatre marquees, office lights, bridge floodlights, and desk lamps are extinguished for Night Without Light. (For information on documentation efforts and the day's events, call Visual AIDS at 206-6758.)

Washing It Down—Dec. 4 at 6: Morley Safer grills chefs Julia Child and Jacques Pépin, who have promised to talk about a lot of things (art, literature, manual agility) but will probably end up talking about food. (Sotheby's, York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7377.) . . . ¶ Dec. 5 at 6: Brewmaster Jerry Kuziw sets out flagons (or samples, at least) of beers brewed according to Colonial recipes. (Fraunces Tavern Museum, 54 Pearl St. For more information, call 425-1778.)

Readings—Nov. 30 at 8: Susanna Moore reads from her recent novel, "In the Cut." (New School, 66 W. 12th St. 229-5690.) . . . ¶ Dec. 3 at 3: Rachel Wetzsteon and Rika Lesser read from their poetry collections, "The Other Stars" and "All We Need of Hell," respectively. (Jane's Café, 254 Greene St. For more information, call 1-718 847-1482.) . . . ¶ Dec. 4 at 8: Irish poets Paul Durcan, Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin, and Eamon Grennan read from their work. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.) . . . ¶ Dec. 5 at 7: Poets Cornelius Eady and Molly Peacock read from their work. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. For more information, call the Academy of American Poets at 274-0343.)

Talks—Nov. 29 at 6:30: Art historian Robert Rosenblum follows the development of symbolist landscapes in the work of such Northern European artists and writers as Edvard Munch, Ferdinand Hodler, and August Strindberg. (National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. For reservations, call 369-4880.) . . . ¶ Dec. 1 at 7:30: Peter Marcuse, Ron Shiffman, and Mzwanele Mayekiso discuss the convergence of current racial policies in cities in the United States and South Africa. (Brecht Forum, 122 W. 27th St. 242-4201.) . . . ¶ Dec. 2 at 2: Gardener Madeleine Keeve leads an outdoor workshop in conifer care, among the spruce, cedars, firs, and pines at Wave Hill. (W. 249th St. at Independence Ave., the Bronx. For information, call 1-718 549-3200.)

Tour—Dec. 2 at 1: John Wilson of Citywalks combs the Greenwich Village streets north of Washington Square for such landmarks as the last remaining antebellum mansion on lower Fifth Avenue and the onetime stable doors on the now fashionable mews. For more information, call 989-2456.

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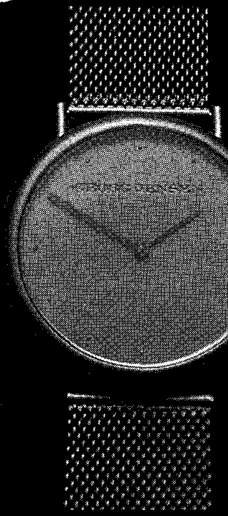

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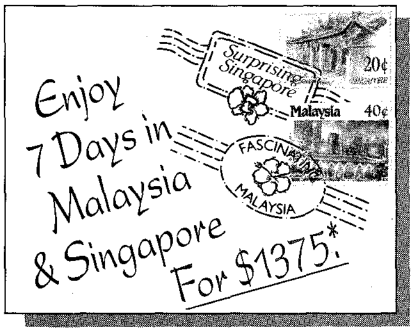

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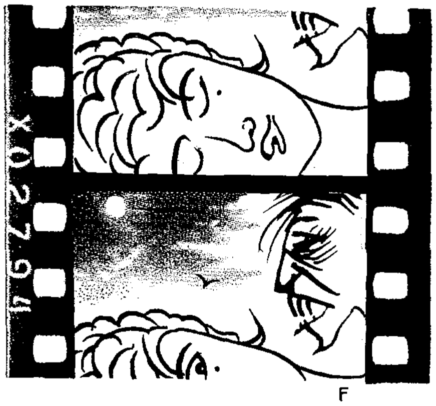
THE MOVIES



FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

Things to Do in Denver When You're Dead—A retired gangster (Andy Garcia) rounds up his old cohorts (William Forsythe, Christopher Lloyd, Treat Williams, and Bill Nunn) for one final job. With Christopher Walken and Steve Buscemi. Written by Scott Rosenberg; directed by Gary Fleder. Opening December 1. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

When Billy Broke His Head . . . and Other Tales of Wonder—An hour-long documentary that focusses on the life of Billy Golfus, its writer-narrator, after he suffered brain damage in a 1984 motor-scooter accident. Showing with "Franz Kafka's It's a Wonderful Life," a short by Peter Capaldi, in which the author of "The Metamorphosis" (Richard E. Grant) suffers a case of writer's block. Opening November 29. (Film Forum.)

White Man's Burden—John Travolta plays an unemployed factory worker and Harry Belafonte a factory owner, in a drama set in a hypothetical world in which blacks predominate in the middle and upper classes, and whites are a minority. Written and directed by Desmond Nakano. Opening December 1. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Wild Bill—Jeff Bridges has the title role in Walter Hill's new Western. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) Opening December 1. (19th Street East 6, Manhattan Twin, East 85th Street, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

CURRENT FILMS

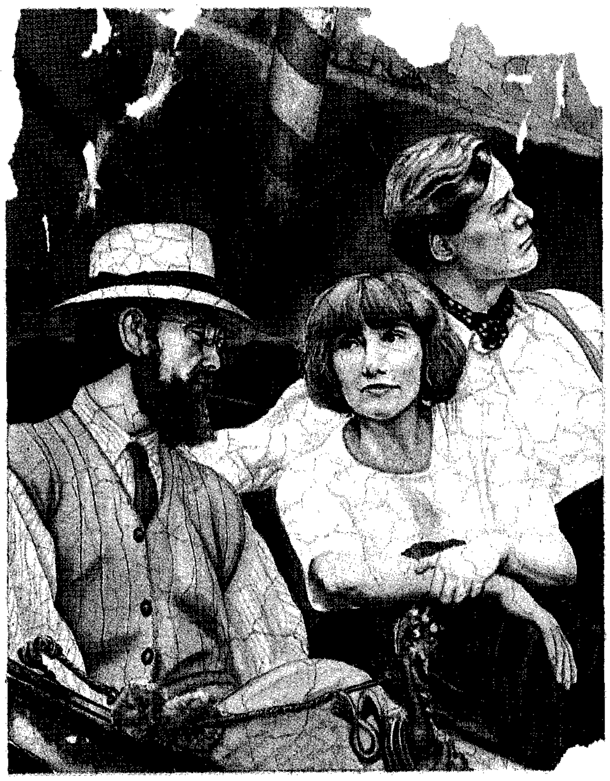
(The signed notes are by Bruce Diones, Anthony Lane, and Terrence Rafferty. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given. Theatre information is listed on page 31.)

Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls—On paper, Jim Carrey's latest smash is just a bunch of strung-together set pieces that make the writing on last season's "Saturday Night Live" look hilarious. But like Jerry Lewis and, to a degree, Steve Martin, Carrey can make the idiotic seem inspired, and his manic mugging creates some big laughs. It's not acting, but what other star can turn his mouth into—literally—a toilet?—B.D. (Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, Gemini, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Olympia, and Criterion Center.)

The American President—In Rob Reiner's romantic comedy, the Chief Executive (Michael Douglas) is a widower—a lonely guy in the White House. The script, by Aaron Sorkin, wastes no time setting him up with a nice girl (Annette Bening), who is lobbying him for tougher environmental laws. This dopey premise creates enough crises to keep the lovers from achieving their destined bliss until an hour and fifty minutes has passed; but if contrivance this monumental is what it takes to put over an "old-fashioned" romantic comedy these days, the genre is in big trouble. There's a political agenda, too: this President gradually sheds his Clark Kentish New Democrat disguise and transforms himself into a liberal Man of Steel. Douglas isn't ideally cast, but Bening is spirited and glamorous, and the picture benefits from hilarious bits by some of the supporting players—notably David Paymer, Richard Dreyfuss, and Michael J. Fox. It's a shame that the movie whose coattails these wonderful actors are attached to is such an empty suit. Also with Martin Sheen, Anna Deavere Smith, and Shawna Waldron.—T.R. (11/20/95) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, 34th St. East, Coronet, Orpheum VII, Lincoln Square, and Criterion Center.)

The Babysitter—Before Alicia Silverstone starred in "Clueless," she took the lead in this drama about a suburban teen-ager hired to watch over three children. Written and directed by Guy Ferland, who based his screenplay on a Robert Coover short story. (Film Forum.)

Carrington—The life and loves of the Bloomsbury painter Dora Carrington, as re-created by writer-director Christopher Hampton. She was an average artist with a first-class libido, and it comes as no surprise that the camera is drawn less to her easel than to her bed. Trying to work out the list of its occupants, however, is a joyless and confusing task—her marriage is such an on-off arrangement that you never know when the husband (Steven Waddington) will pop up next. Emma Thompson's Carrington looks mournful and besieged (as well she might), and Hampton allows the period detail and lazy pacing to muffle his natural Wildean gift for good lines. Jonathan Pryce (in a beard



Jonathan Pryce, Emma Thompson, and Steven Waddington in "Carrington."

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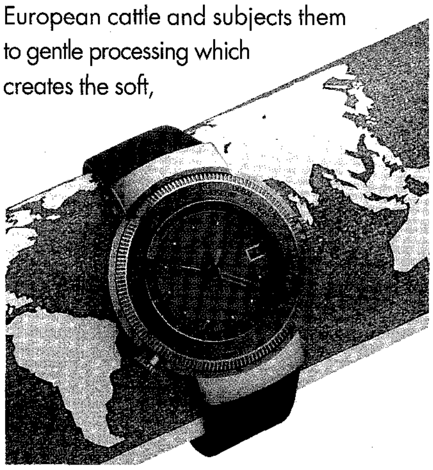

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Beverly Hills · Miami · Newport Beach · Las Vegas · Aspen · and other finest stores nationwide.

From the name of the dealer nearest you, call toll free 800.521.5152 or 800.631.1580 like a bramble hedge) rescues the movie as Lytton Strachey, who was Carrington's long-term love rather than short-order lover. Strachey's manner was all effeteness, but thanks to Pryce you sense the steeliness of purpose behind it. If only Hampton's movie could boast the same.—A.L. (11/27/95) (Paris.)

Casino—Robert De Niro, Sharon Stone, and Joe Pesci star in Martin Scorsese's examination of the Mafia in Las Vegas during the early seventies. Written by the director and Nicholas Pileggi. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (Beekman, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, Ziegfeld, and Lincoln Square.)

Copycat—Sigourney Weaver stars as a San Francisco serial-murder buff (great job) who is attacked by a particularly nasty specimen (Harry Connick, Jr., plus pimples) and spends most of the rest of the picture hiding at home. From there she helps a local cop (Holly Hunter) in the search for *another* murderer, whose idea of fun is to copy famous slayings of the past. The plot would seem more ingenious if the movie itself didn't copy so many other thrillers, and if it weren't so easy to spot every twist half an hour in advance. Jon Amiel directed.—A.L. (11/13/95) (Village East Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, Lincoln Square, Olympia, and Criterion Center.)

The Crossing Guard—Writer-director Sean Penn's story of a grief-stricken man (Jack Nicholson) bent on killing the drunk driver (David Morse) who ran down his daughter is brooding, contemplative, and rather colorless. Nicholson and Anjelica Huston, who plays his ex-wife, give performances that lift the film, here and there, above its earnestness; and Penn shapes the scenes of Nicholson drowning his sorrows in strip clubs with a sad, gritty lewdness. But ultimately all that melancholy stifles the characters.—B.D. (Angelika Film Center, Gotham Cinema, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

Fair Game—Cindy Crawford's screen début (she plays a lawyer on the run—God knows why—from former K.G.B. agents) is a true disaster from start to finish. But not all the bad acting is Crawford's (who, at least, is game); William Baldwin and Steven Berkoff do their share, too. Directed, with tremendous explosions, by Andrew Sipes.—B.D. (Village East Cinemas, 23rd St. West Triplex, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

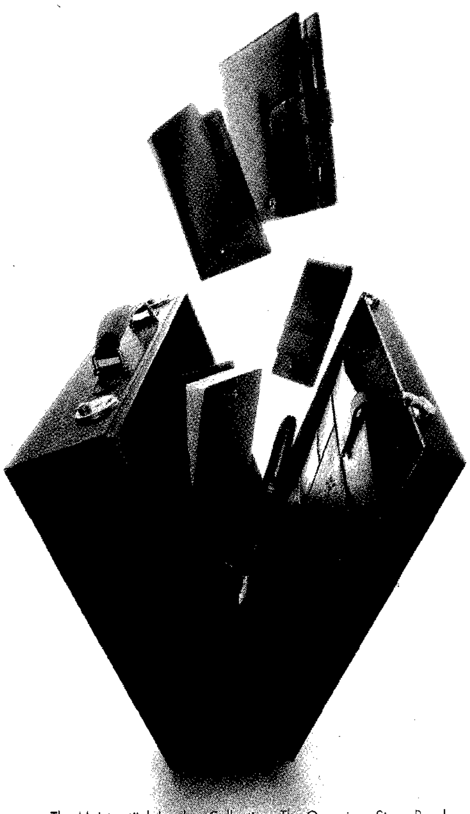
Frankie Starlight—A romantic drama, set in Dublin after the Second World War, that centers on a dwarf (Alan Pentony as a youth, Corban Walker as an adult) who writes a novel about his mother (Anne Parillaud) and her lovers (Matt Dillon and Gabriel Byrne). Directed by Michael Lindsay-Hogg. Screenplay by Chet Raymo and Ronan O'Leary, from Raymo's 1993 novel, "The Dork of Cork." (Quad Cinema and Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

Get Shorty—John Travolta plays Chili Palmer, a small-time Miami loan shark who winds up in Hollywood, where he discovers his true métier and fulfills his destiny: he becomes a movie producer. Scott Frank's screenplay is based on an Elmore Leonard novel. The director, Barry Sonnenfeld, doesn't have the dexterity to trap the story's tiny, quick ironies; he works too strenuously for laughs. But Travolta's no-sweat acting—which deftly captures the dry comic tone of Leonard's prose—keeps the movie watchable. Also with Rene Russo, Gene Hackman, Danny DeVito, Delroy Lindo, and Dennis Farina.—T.R. (10/23/95) (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, Baronet, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, and Criterion Center.)

GoldenEye—The eighteenth James Bond movie, in which Pierce Brosnan assumes the mantle of 007, is a queasy mixture of the new and the old: it starts with a stunt that you won't believe and ends with the kind of explosions you've seen a thousand times; Bond's boss, M (Judi Dench), accuses him of being a sexist dinosaur, while his latest love, Natalya (Izabella Scorupco, who gives every sign of being a proper actress), has to stroll along in a white bikini under a vulgar sunset. (Although much of the action unfolds among grubby Mafia types in post-Soviet St. Petersburg, Martin Campbell, the director, can't resist Caribbean hideaways.) Jeffrey Caine and Bruce Feirstein's script promises more fun than it delivers, slowly frittering away its store of jokes and thrills. Brosnan, however, looks set to stay. He'll never recapture the amused cool of the young Sean Connery, but he does overcome the handicap of looking like a humorless male model. What succeeding movies will do with Bond is another matter: our hero may be running out of enemies. With Sean Bean as 006 and Famke Janssen as a Russian beauty with homicidal thighs.—A.L. (11/27/95) (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Home for the Holidays—An ensemble piece for Thanksgiving, directed by Jodie Foster, in which members of a semi-ordinary American family gather to eat and bond and generally make life a complete screaming hell for one another. Foster connects with her cast (it includes Anne Bancroft, Charles Durning, Geraldine Chaplin, Robert Downey, Jr., and the funny and fearless Holly Hunter), but the tone staggers wildly, and long before the end any inquiring edge has dulled into softness.—A.L. (11/13/95) (19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, Tower East, Orpheum VII, Lincoln Square, and Embassy 2.)

Leaving Las Vegas—In Mike Figgis's startlingly beautiful new movie, Nicolas Cage gives a great performance as a failed writer who is consciously drinking himself to death. Figgis tells the story as a series of vivid, intense moments; the sole trace of conventional drama is the hero's affair with a kindhearted young hooker (superbly played by Elisabeth Shue).



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Aristotle

MONT BLANC
THE ART OF WRITING

But the possibility that love will rescue him from his fate vanishes quickly, like a mirage. Although the movie is terribly, crushingly sad, its honesty is invigorating: it names its poison and downs it, neat.—T.R. (11/6/95) (Village Theatre VII, 59th Street East Cinema, and Lincoln Square.)

Mighty Aphrodite—Woody Allen stars in his latest picture as Lenny, a New York sportswriter bored by his wife (Helena Bonham Carter) and attracted to a hooker (Mira Sorvino) who happens to be the mother—though she doesn't know it—of his adopted son. The movie treads enjoyably over old ground, though rather than cruising along with the ease of Allen's best work it tends to hobble, and it closes in a flurry of undecided endings. Sorvino's comic momentum rescues it. She offers the alarming prospect of sexual comedy without neurosis; you don't see *that* too often in a Woody Allen film.—A.L. (10/30/95) (19th Street East 6, Cinema II, 86th Street East Twin, Art Greenwich Twin, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Johnny Depp and Christopher Walken in "Nick of Time."

GEOFFREY PARKER

Money Train—Another "Lethal Weapon"-type buddy picture, filled with competitive energy and smart-ass retorts. This one stars Wesley Snipes and Woody Harrelson and has been polished to a high gloss by director Joseph Ruben (who did such wonders with another cookie-cutter screenplay in "Sleeping with the Enemy"). Ruben spends more time on token character development than this fluff requires, and the movie drags in parts. But when it gets to the action—the sensational robbing of an armored New York City subway train—the audience may feel that it's a token well spent.—B.D. (Village Theatre VII, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and National Twin.)

Nick of Time—Terrorists seize the daughter of an accountant (Johnny Depp) and force him to attempt to assassinate the Governor of California, in a thriller directed by John Badham. With Christopher Walken, Charles S. Dutton, and Marsha Mason. Written by Patrick Sheane Duncan. (19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Manhattan Twin, Orpheum VII, Art Greenwich Twin, 84th Street Sixplex, and Astor Plaza.)

Persuasion—The young British director Roger Michell has made a Jane Austen movie that is never pretty and only occasionally charming; instead, it is troubled, astringent, and touched with melancholy—not unlike the novel. Amanda Root plays Anne Elliot, who once turned down Frederick Wentworth (Ciaran Hinds) and has regretted it ever since. They come together again—in the country, by the sea, and on the streets of Bath—and you can guess the outcome, but Michell somehow tenses a simple narrative into suspense. With Sophie Thompson as Anne's sister, Corin Redgrave as their monstrous father, and Fiona Shaw as the worldly wife of an admiral.—A.L. (9/25/95) (Eastside Playhouse, Quad Cinema, and Lincoln Square.)

Powder—A saccharine nightmare about an albino teen-ager (Sean Patrick Flanery) with telekinetic powers and an otherworldly I.Q. It begins with a rip-off of "Edward Scissorhands," moves into De Palma territory, then becomes a tearjerker, and finally crashes in a lightning storm of special effects. With Mary Steenburgen and Jeff Goldblum. Directed by Victor Salva.—B.D. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy 3.)

Reckless—Craig Lucas has written this film adaptation of his 1988 black comedy, in which a housewife (Mia Farrow) embarks on a journey of self-discovery after her husband (Tony Goldwyn) hires a hit man to murder her. With Scott Glenn, Mary-Louise Parker, Eileen Brennan, Giancarlo Esposito, and Stephen Dorff. Directed by Norman René. (Village East Cinemas and Lincoln Square.)

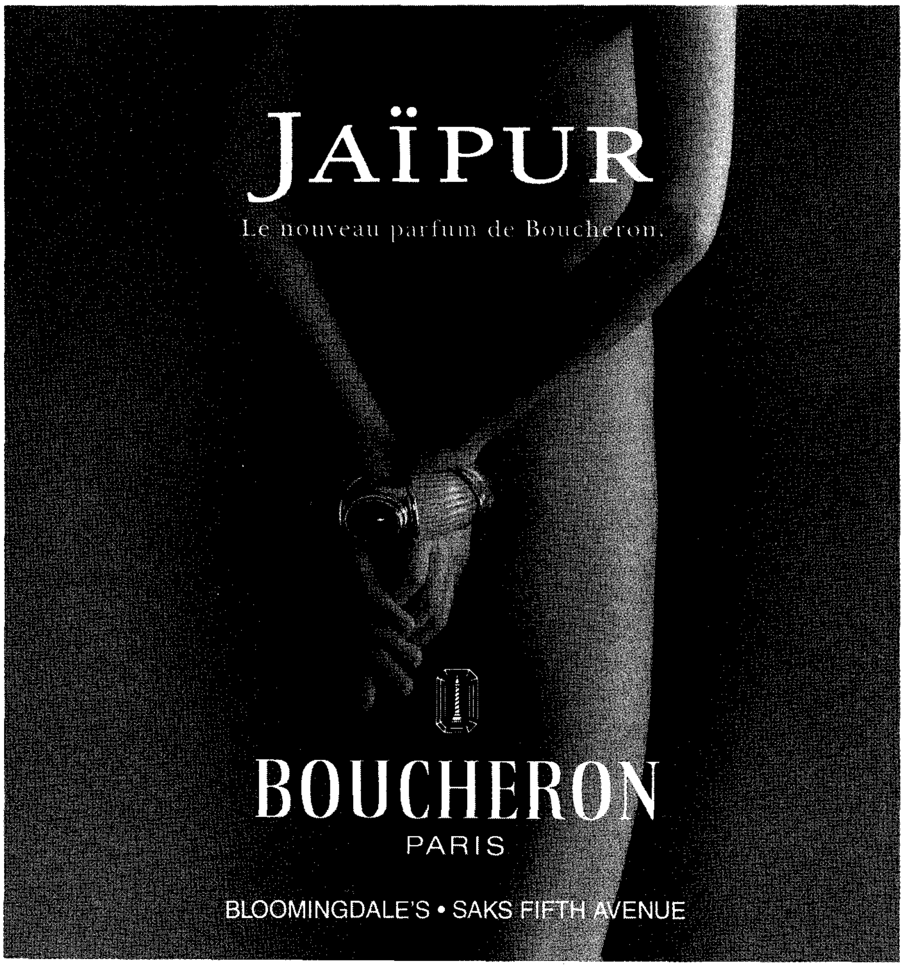
Toy Story—The computer-animation company Pixar, which is responsible for some great state-of-the-art TV ads (Listerine, Levi's), has teamed up with Disney on what they both hope will be a merchandising phenomenon. The easy-to-follow screenplay, about the rivalry between two toys—cowboy Woody and spaceman Buzz Lightyear—should excite young children; teen-agers and parents can enjoy the brilliantly executed action sequences. The filmmakers have gotten around the coldness of so much computer animation by using the warm and friendly voices of Tom Hanks and Tim Allen. Yes, it's a come-on for Disney products, but all their children's films are about marketing; at least this one—unlike "Pocahontas"—has some zip.—B.D. (Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema I, Cinema 3rd Avenue, 86th Street East Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Guild, and Lincoln Square.)

Traps—A drama directed by Pauline Chan, set in French Indochina in 1950—on the eve of revolution—in which a journalist (Robert Reynolds) and his photographer wife (Saskia Reeves) visit a rubber plantation run by a Frenchman (Sami Frey) and his strange daughter (Jacqueline McKenzie). Written by the director and Robert Carter, from Kate Grenville's 1986 novel, "Dreamhouse." (Cinema Village.)

Two Bits—An old man (Al Pacino) in Depression-era Philadelphia shares the last day of his life with his grandson (Jerry Barone), in James Foley's drama. With Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio and narration by Alec Baldwin. Written by Joseph Stefano. (68th St. Playhouse.)

ALSO PLAYING

THE ADDICTION: Angelika Film Center. . . . **APOLLO 13** (reviewed in our issue of 7/10/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **BABE** (9/4/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **BLUE IN THE FACE** (10/23/95): Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **THE BROTHERS MC MULLEN:** Village East Cinemas. . . . **CLUELESS:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **CRUMB** (5/1/95): Cinema 3. . . . **DEAD PRESIDENTS:** Embassy 4. . . . **DEVIL IN A BLUE DRESS** (10/2/95): Waverly. . . . **DR. JEKYLL AND MS. HYDE:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **ECLIPSE:** Quad Cinema. . . . **HOW TO MAKE AN AMERICAN QUILT:** Manhattan Twin. . . . **IT TAKES TWO:** Village East Cinemas, New York Twin, East 85th Street, and Lincoln Square. . . . **KICKING AND SCREAMING:** Angelika Film Center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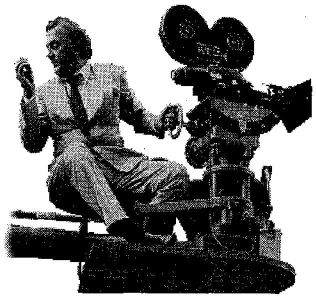

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THEATRE ADDRESSES

(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th St.
34th St. East, 241 E. 34th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Plaza, 42 E. 58th St.
Manhattan Twin, Third Ave. at 59th St.
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Baronet and Coronet, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
Gemini 1 and 2, Second Ave. at 64th St.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
68th St. Playhouse, Third Ave. at 68th St.
Tower East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
86th Street East Twin, Third Ave. at 86th St.

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
Waverly 1 and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd St.
Guild, 33 W. 50th St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.
Carnegie Hall Cinemas, Seventh Ave. between 56th and 57th Sts.
Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St.
Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St. (757-2280).
Regency, Broadway at 67th St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
Embassy 1, Broadway at 46th St.
Embassy 2, 3, and 4, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
National Twin, Broadway at 44th St.

REVIVALS

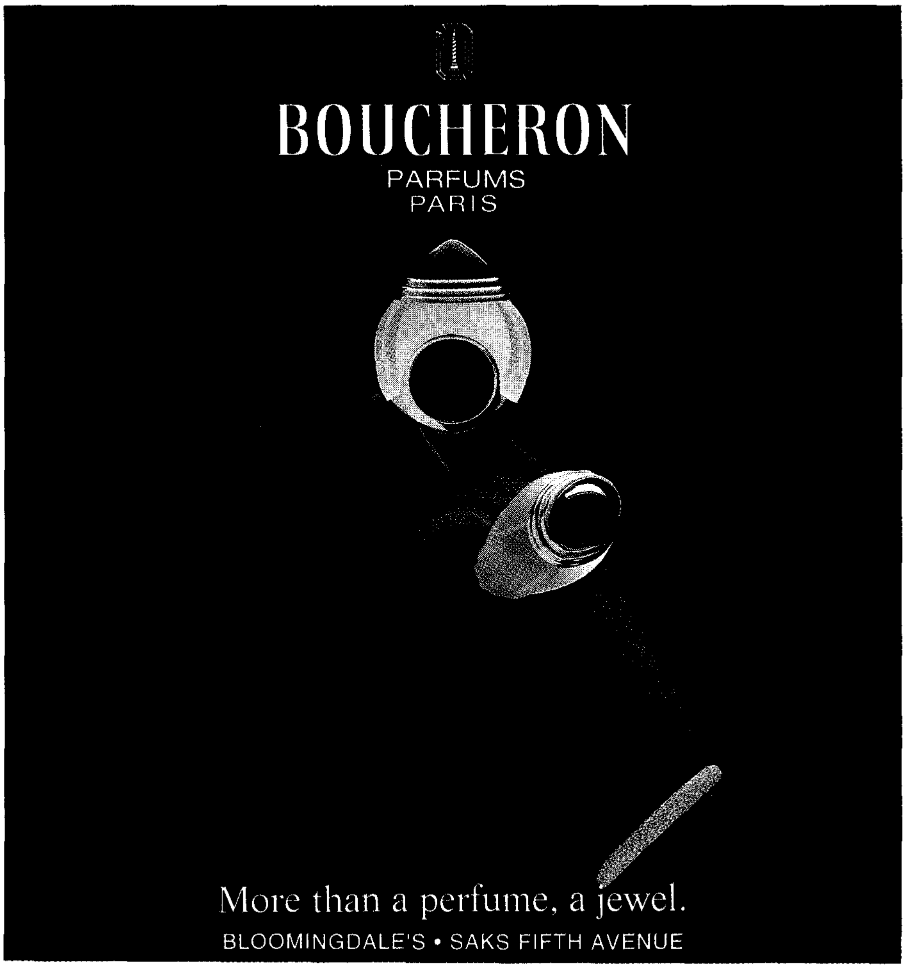
(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Michael Sragow. Theatre addresses and phone numbers appear with the listings following these notes.)

Bugsy Malone (1976)—An aberration from England, set in New York in 1929 and made with a cast of children, average age twelve. The children don't play children, though. Little boys with their hair slicked down impersonate the Hollywood-movie racketeers of the Prohibition era; in their fedoras and double-breasted suits, these hoods look like midgets, and the speakeasies, molls, automobiles are all slightly miniaturized. This picture is a kiddie-gangster musical, with slapstick gang wars; it operates on darlingness and the kitsch of innocence. Alan Parker wrote and directed (it's his first film); the score (sung by adults) is by Paul Williams. With Jodie Foster as the vamp Tallulah.—P.K. (Walter Reade Theatre; Dec. 2-3.)

Chappaqua (1967)—Conrad Rooks stars himself in this hokey phantasmagorical-autobiographical account of a spoiled rich boy's drug visions and his attempted cure at a sanatorium in Paris; Jean-Louis Barrault is the attending physician. Eugen Schüfftan started as the cameraman, then was replaced by Robert Frank, who shot most of the startlingly elegant footage, which has been stunningly edited; the sound is also often experimental. But Rooks is at his peak when he shuffles around in his nightie, blinking sleepily; when he tries to act, he's hopeless. He financed the film and takes credit as both director and writer, but there is little evidence of either function. The film seems autoerotic, in a pre-sexual way; it's put together as a psychedelic turn-on, mostly about the fun and glamour of addiction, with a score by Ravi Shankar, who also appears in the film, as do William S. Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg, Ornette Coleman, Paula Pritchett, Swami Satchidananda, Moondog, and the Fugs.—P.K. (Whitney Museum; Nov. 29-Dec. 3.)

High Tide (1987)—The Australian director Gillian Armstrong has the technique and the assurance to put a woman's fluid, not fully articulated emotions right onto the screen. And she has an actress—Judy Davis—who's a genius at moods. As one of three backup singers for a touring Elvis imitator, Davis is contemptuous of the cruddy act, contemptuous of herself. Feeling put down, the dumb-lug Elvis fires her, and she's left alone at the beginning of winter in a ramshackle beach town on the magnificent, windswept coast of New South Wales. There she encounters her lonely teen-age daughter (Claudia Karvan), whom she'd given up to her confident, belligerent mother-in-law (Jan Adele) thirteen years earlier. The film's emotional suggestiveness makes it almost a primal woman's picture. The superb cinematography is by Russell Boyd.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Nov. 30 and Dec. 2.)

Jimmy the Gent (1934)—Swift, lowdown entertainment. James Cagney is the title character, who's in the racket of finding heirs for uncollected fortunes; Bette Davis is his former girl Friday, who's gone to work for the fake-classy competition (Alan Dinehart). To win her back, Cagney—who sports a close-to-the-skull haircut that (as Andrew Bergman once observed) gives him the profile of a Boston terrier and a back-of-the-head resemblance to Sluggo—tries to gentrify himself. What makes his performance so richly humorous is his knack for revealing incongruous yearnings beneath the brutal veneer. He and Davis are a perfect match—they know how to soften their personae without weakening their spines. The whole movie has a healthy cynicism: it targets hypocrisy and people who put on airs. (Af-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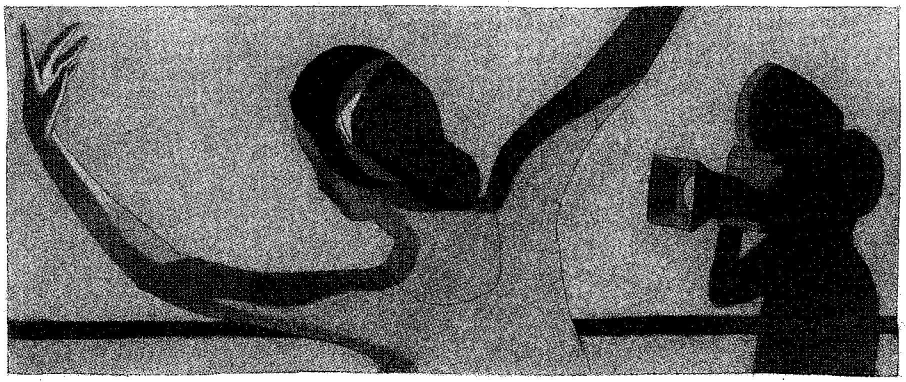
ter he sips too much tea, Cagney's stomach sounds like faulty plumbing.) Michael Curtiz directed; Bertram Milhauser wrote the script, based on a story by Laird Doyle and Ray Nazarro.—M.S. (Film Forum 2; Nov. 29.)

The Major and the Minor (1942)—Determinedly sassy wartime comedy, in which Ginger Rogers, as a New York career girl down on her luck, without enough money to return home to Iowa, dresses up as a twelve-year-old and buys a half-fare railroad ticket. On the train, she meets Ray Milland, an Army major stationed at a military school for boys, and he is bewildered by his attraction to the overgrown tyke. The major's fiancée (Rita Johnson) becomes suspicious, so the heroine is forced to keep up her charade, even while fending off lecherous youngsters at the school. The farce situations are pushed too broadly, and have a sanctimonious patriotic veneer, but this first American film directed by Billy Wilder was a box-office hit. With Robert Benchley, Frankie Thomas, Diana Lynn as the kid who sees through the heroine's masquerade, and Lela Rogers, Ginger's mother, who plays her mother. The script is by Charles Brackett and Wilder.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Nov. 30.)



At the Walter Reade Theatre, Donya Feuer's "The Dancer."

HERVE BLONDON

My Man Godfrey (1936)—In this entertaining (and hugely successful) screwball comedy about the Depression, Carole Lombard is a rich, gorgeous nit who goes to the city dump to find a "forgotten man." The man she finds—a suave, bitter victim of the economic collapse—is played by William Powell. The movie starts out with a promising satiric idea and winds up in box-office romance, but it's likable and well paced even at its silliest. Lombard shrieks happily and Powell modulates impeccably. With Mischa Auer doing a simian imitation to amuse his patron, Alice Brady. Also with Franklin Pangborn, Grady Sutton, Jean Dixon, Gail Patrick, Alan Mowbray, Eugene Pallette, and, in a bit part, Jane Wyman. Directed by Gregory La Cava. Like several of the Astaire-Rogers musicals, this film has a sleek and silvery Art Deco look.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Dec. 3-4.)

Orchids and Ermine (1927)—Lively, gifted Colleen Moore, the best comedienne of the silent flapper period, wore her dark hair short and straight with bangs—it was an almost abstract frame for the games she played with her eyes and mouth. No mere personality girl but a light, unaffected, inventive actress, in style she was a little like Buster Keaton. In this romantic comedy she's a telephone operator who has just about given up her hopes of landing a rich husband. She works in a swank New York hotel, which is called the Ritz, but which is actually the Plaza; Jack Mulhall plays a young millionaire, and Gwen Lee and Sam Hardy are a gold-digger and a valet. There is a sequence at the hotel switchboard when a midget addresses Miss Moore—the "midget" is one of the first screen appearances of Mickey Rooney. Alfred Santell directed. With Hedda Hopper as a modiste. Silent.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Dec. 4.)

The Richest Girl in the World (1934)—Miriam Hopkins is the rich girl who is wary of fortune hunters; so she persuades her secretary, Fay Wray, to swap places with her whenever they're in public. Joel McCrea is the young man who falls crazily in love with Miriam, but thinks he'd better be practical and go after Fay. This surprisingly sexy romantic comedy has been almost forgotten. Hopkins was still in her most seductive phase; this was made just a couple of years after "Trouble in Paradise," and she has her distinctive flash and wit. Directed by William A. Seiter.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Dec. 5.)

LATE RUNS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Screwball comedies from the twenties, thirties, and forties. Nov. 29: "Boy Meets Girl" (1938, Lloyd Bacon), with James Cagney and Pat O'Brien, and "Jimmy the Gent" (†). . . . Nov. 30: "The Major and the Minor" (†) and "Professional Sweetheart" (1933, William A. Seiter), with Ginger Rogers and Gregory Ratoff. . . . Dec. 1-2: "Bringing Up Baby" (1938, Howard Hawks), with Katharine Hepburn, Cary Grant, and Charles Ruggles, and "Holiday" (1938, George Cukor), with Hepburn, Grant, Edward Everett Horton, Lew Ayres, and Doris Nolan. . . . Dec. 3-4: "Nothing Sacred" (1937, William Wellman), with Carole Lombard and Fredric March, and "My Man Godfrey" (†). . . . Dec. 4 (evening only): "Orchids and Ermine" (†) and "The Cruise of the Jasper B." (1926, James Horne; silent), with Rod La Rocque and Mildred Harris. . . . Dec. 5: "The Richest Girl in the World" (†) and "Woman Chases Man" (1937, John G. Blystone), with Miriam Hopkins and Joel McCrea.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A series of films from Australia. Nov. 30 at 2:30: "In This Life's Body" (1984, Corinne and Arthur Cantrill). . . . Nov. 30 at 6: "Dusty" (1983, John Richardson), with Bill Kerr. . . . Nov. 30 at 8 and Dec. 2 at 5: "High Tide" (†). . . . Dec. 1 at 2:30 and Dec. 5 at 6: "The Cheaters" (1930, Paulette McDonagh; silent). . . . Dec. 1 at 6 and Dec. 3 at 2: "A Street to Die" (1985, Bill Bennett). . . . Dec. 1 at 8 and Dec. 4 at 6: "Bliss" (1985, Ray Lawrence), with Barry Otto. . . . Dec. 2 at 2: "Between Wars" (1974, Michael Thornhill), with Corin Redgrave and Judy Morris. . . . Dec. 3 at 5 and Dec. 5 at 2:30: "Camera Natura" (1986, Ross Gibson) and "Cane Toads: An Unnatural History" (1988, Mark Lewis). . . . Dec. 4 at 2:30: "Money Movers" (1979, Bruce Beresford). . . . ¶ Nov. 30 at 3 and 6: "Bauhaus in America" (1995, Judith Pearlman), a documentary. . . . ¶ Dec. 1 at 3: "Before the Nickelodeon: The Early Cinema of Edwin S. Porter" (1982, Charles Musser) and "Correction Please, or How We Got Into Pictures" (1979, Noel Burch). . . . ¶ Dec. 1 at 6 and Dec. 3 at 5: "Garden of Scorpions" (1991, Oleg Kovalov; in Russian). . . . ¶ Dec. 1 at 8 and Dec. 3 at 2:30: "From the Pole to the Equator" (1986, Yervant Gianikan). . . . ¶ Dec. 2 at 2:30 and Dec. 5 at 6: "Caméra d'Afrique" (1983, Férid Boughedir), a documentary. . . . ¶ Dec. 2 at 5 and Dec. 5 at 3: "Caméra Arabe" (1987, Boughedir), a documentary. . . . ¶ Dec. 4 at 3: "Germany Awake!" (1968, Erwin Leiser), a documentary. . . . ¶ Dec. 4 at 6:30: Short films made between 1991 and 1993 by Gary Goldberg, who will be present.

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level (875-5600)—Films starring Jessie Matthews. Nov. 29 at 3:45 and 8:30: "Sailing Along" (1938, Sonnie Hale). . . . Nov. 29 at 5:15: "Evergreen" (1934, Victor Saville). . . . Nov. 29 at 7 and Nov. 30 at 4:30: "Gangway" (1937, Hale). . . . Nov. 30 at 6:30: "The Good Companions" (1933, Saville). . . . Nov. 30 at 8:30: "It's Love Again" (1936, Saville). . . . ¶ A series of films on dance. Dec. 1 at 6:15 and 8:30; Dec. 2-3 at 4, 6, and 8; Dec. 4 at 8:45; and Dec. 5 at 4: "The Dancer" (1994, Donya Feuer). . . . Dec. 4 at 2, 4:15, and 6:30, and Dec. 5 at 2: "Nijinsky: A Life" (1975, Feuer) and "Sevillanas" (1991, Carlos Saura). . . . ¶ Weekend showings for children. Dec. 2-3 at 2: "Bugsy Malone" (†).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (1-718 784-0077)—A sampling of films made at the Astoria Studio over its seventy-five-year history. Dec. 3 at 2: "The Age of Innocence" (1993, Martin Scorsese), with Daniel Day-Lewis, Michelle Pfeiffer, and Winona Ryder. . . . Dec. 3 at 5: "The Cotton Club" (1984, Francis Coppola), with Richard Gere, Gregory Hines, Diane Lane, and Lonette McKee.

Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (864-5400)—Dec. 5 at 7: "The Bicycle Thief" (1949, Vittorio De Sica; in Italian). . . . Dec. 5 at 8:45: "Raging Bull" (1980, Martin Scorsese), with Robert De Niro, Cathy Moriarty, and Joe Pesci.

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Dec. 5 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "The Diary of a Country Priest" (1950, Robert Bresson; in French), with Claude Laydu and Nicole Maurey.

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850)—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On Dec. 3 at 7, the feature will be "There's No Business Like Show Business" (1954, Walter Lang), with Ethel Merman, Dan Dailey, Donald O'Connor, Marilyn Monroe, Johnnie Ray, and Mitzi Gaynor.

Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—"Beat Culture and the New America: 1950-65." Nov. 29 at 1:30: "The Cry of Jazz" (1958, Ed Bland) and "The World According to John Coltrane" (1991, Toby Byron and Robert Palmer). . . . Nov. 30 at 2:30: "Pull My Daisy" (1959, Robert Frank and Alfred Leslie) and four short films. . . . Dec. 3 at 1:30: "Anticipation of the Night" (1958, Stan Brakhage). . . . ¶ Robert Frank films. Nov. 29 at 4, Nov. 30 at 6:15, and Dec. 1-3 at 4: "Chappaqua" (†).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.—Starting Dec. 1, "Tutto Italiano: A Festival of New Italian Cinema," including "The Man Who Checks the Meter" (1995, Stefano Incerti), "Vrindavan" (1995, Lamberto Lambertini), "Palermo-Milan, One Way" (1995, Rosella Drudi and Claudio Fragasso), "Strange Stories" (1995, Sandro Baldoni), "Black Holes" (1995, Pappi Corsicato), "Pierced by a Ray of Sun" (1995, Claudio Del Punta), and "World Upside Down" (1995, Isabella Sandri). (For information about tickets, call 726-8627.)

Gramercy Theatre, 127 E. 23rd St.—Through Dec. 7, the 3rd Annual Contemporary African Diaspora Film Festival, featuring thirty-four films from twenty-eight countries. (For information about tickets, call 749-6020.)

Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. (854-7799)—Documentaries that have been nominated for or have won the Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature or Best Documentary Short Subject. Nov. 29 at 7:30: "Hearts and Minds" (1974, Peter Davis).

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—Nov. 29 at 8: Excerpts from, among other films, "The Man Who Knew Too Much" and "The Last Picture Show.". . . Nov. 30 at 8, Dec. 2 at 4 and 8, and Dec. 3 at 6 and 8: Five different programs of films by Beth B. . . . Dec. 1 at 8: A program of short films preserved by Anthology. . . . Dec. 2 at 6: "Film Portrait" (1971, Jerome Hill). . . . Dec. 3 at 9:30: "Songs 1-14" (1964-65, Stan Brakhage).

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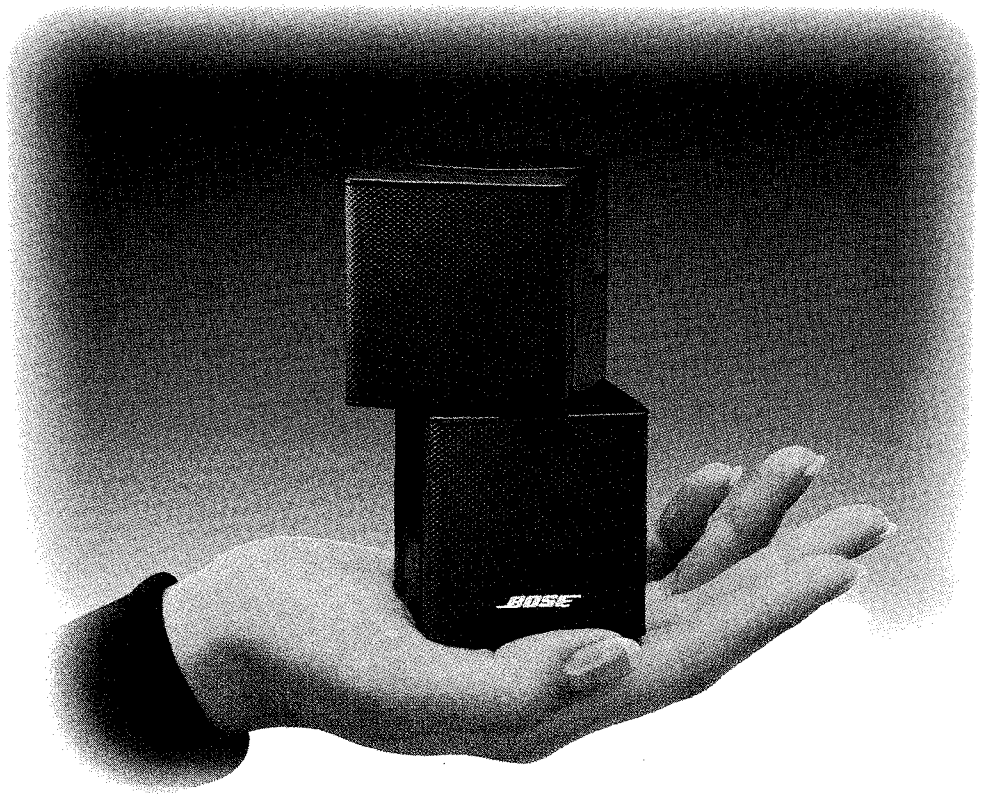

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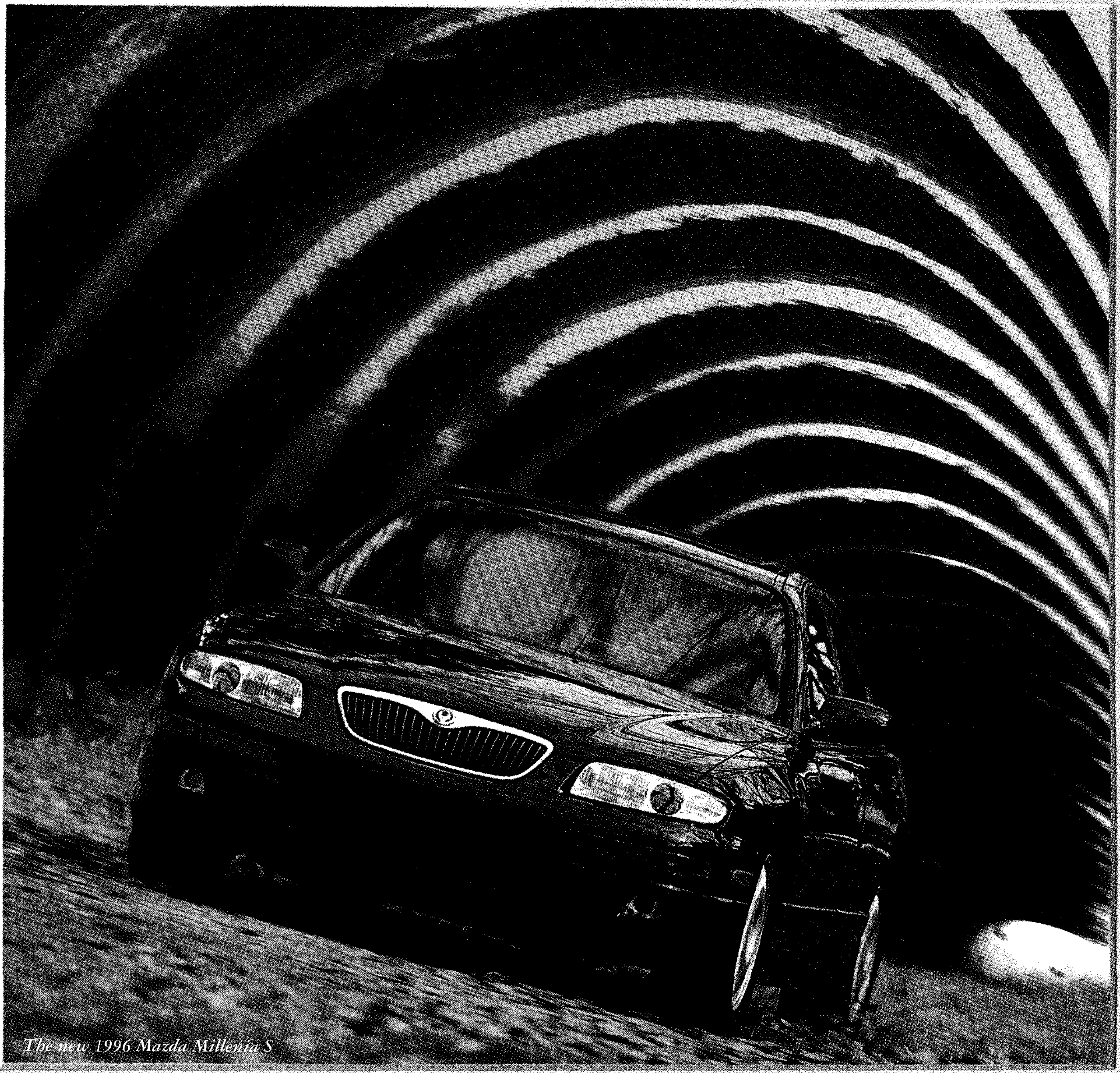

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THE NEW YORKER

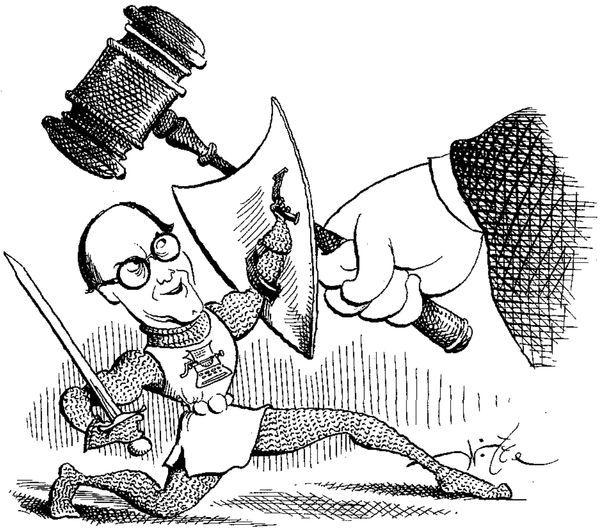
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

THE PRESS V. THE COURTS

STEPHEN SHEPARD is as outraged as the next journalist at restraints on the freedom to publish, but he has to admit that bad law has been good to him. Shepard is the editor of *Business Week*, which this past September was enjoined from printing a relatively modest story describing a lawsuit filed by the consumer-products giant Procter & Gamble against Bankers Trust, alleging fraudulent trading practices. The injunction, which was highly unusual and almost certainly unconstitutional, made for "great publicity," says Shepard, whose businesslike gray-flannel suit is offset by donnish spectacles. "It went from a six-column story in the finance department to a cover story." And what a juicy cover story! When John Feikens, a federal judge, decided to unseal the court papers—without lifting the injunction—*Business Week* plastered its cover with quotes from Bankers Trust traders that were pulled from the document. One quote read, "Funny business, you know? Lure people into that calm and then just totally f— 'em." Suddenly, this rather starchy publication had become not only "a hot magazine," as Shepard says happily, but a crusader for freedom of the press.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MICHAEL WITTE

Promotional value notwithstanding, the stakes of the *Business Week* case are very high. Supreme Court doctrine going back to 1931 expressly prohibits prior restraint of publication, save under the most extraordinary circumstances. Not even the national-security claims advanced by the government in the Pentagon Papers case were enough to persuade the Court to enjoin publication. The events of this fall have thus been genuinely shocking to First Amendment lawyers as well as to members of the press. Judge Feikens initially held that *Business Week* was bound by an earlier decision sealing documents in the case, and neither an appeals court nor Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens proved willing to overturn Judge Feikens's order.



Stephen Shepard

"WE have to get this awful precedent off the books," Shepard says, sitting at a round conference table in his thirty-ninth-floor office, the shades drawn against a brilliantly sunny day. "Right now, if this injunction stands, anyone who merely asks for information that has been sealed by a court is acting unlawfully." And should the decision be upheld, Shepard adds, companies that are already "sealing everything in sight" once they land in court will have found a new weapon to wield against an inquisitive press. On December 6th, an Ohio appeals court will hear *Business Week's* motion to reverse Feikens's ruling. Friend-of-the-court briefs filed by the *Times*, by the company that owns this magazine, and by other news organizations testify to the fear that a protection they have long taken for granted might be breached.

A disturbing undercurrent of antipathy toward the press—or at least toward free-spirited press inquiry—has run through the case. Judge Feikens drafted his initial order in the belief that *Business Week* had illicitly obtained the sealed document—a claim that the magazine had not been given the opportunity to rebut. Even after evidence to the contrary emerged, the judge insisted that the magazine had acquired the document "unlawfully." But what may be even more disturbing is the fact that Justice Stevens ordered the case back to district court in order to determine how the magazine had in fact come by the papers. Shepard points out that the issue should have been moot, since in the Pentagon Papers case the Supreme Court held that even stolen documents could not be subject to prior restraint.

Justice Stevens's order put *Business Week* in a quandary: the magazine was desperate to get the injunction lifted but was determined, as a matter of principle, to protect the source who had provided the document. Linda Himelstein, a *Business Week* editor, took the stand and invoked the First Amendment and New York's "shield law" under tough cross-examination from Bankers Trust's lawyers. It was, Shepard says, a "traumatizing" experience for her. The little that Himelstein said may ultimately have led to a stunningly unexpected source—a partner at Sullivan & Cromwell, Bankers Trust's outside counsel. This revelation punctured the air of high dudgeon that had ruled the proceedings until then. Shepard takes particular satisfaction in testimony that showed that in the past the law firm had encouraged its partners to spin the press for their clients' benefit.

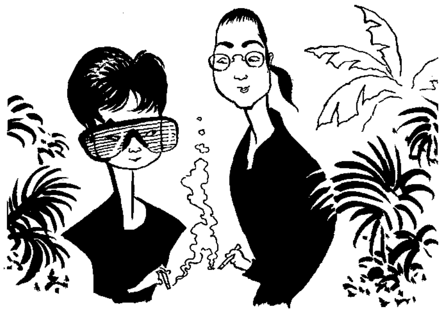
In recent weeks, Shepard has often been asked about parallels between *Business Week's* situation and the decision by CBS not to broadcast an interview with a former tobacco executive on "60 Minutes." "The similarity is that in both cases there were questions raised about the *way* the information was obtained," he says. "The big difference, of course, is that CBS did this to itself. We would *never* not have printed that story." The press, Shepard says, has to show some backbone in the face of corporate threats. A few moments later, the phone rings. "My lawyer," Shepard says with a grin.

FAMILY AFFAIR

THE other night at Manhattan's Ubu Gallery, Yoko Ono stood beside a pair of bronze high-heeled pumps splashed with red paint. She herself was wearing black-and-white platform sneakers, a black trouser suit, and plum-tinted sunglasses—feeble shields against the flashbulbs that exploded in her face. Across the room were other red-spattered bronzes: a splintered baseball bat, a bullet-shattered mirror, a burlap bag about the size of a dead cat. It was the opening of an exhibit of nine sculptures from her series titled "Blood Objects from Family Album," which, along with seventy-three of Ono's pointillist drawings, will be on display until mid-December.

In conversation, some gallerygoers linked the "Blood Objects" to the murder of her husband, John Lennon, in 1980. But the artist said that for inspiration, "I could go back to my birth. All of us have a very bloody beginning. That is the first violence we experience." And, indeed, the drawings that accompany the sculptures have an embryonic quality. Executed with a Rapidograph, they are small doodles of fine dots. Although not exactly representational, they contain recognizable eyes, bird bills, body parts—images that Ono deliberately juxtaposes with the macabre bronzes.

Ono often doodles while other people are chatting, because, she said, "I'm so bad at small talk." And at her opening she did, in fact, seem incapable of schmooze. Shepherded through a thicket of admirers by Jon Hendricks, her personal curator, Ono was almost skittish, except around old friends. She hugged Jill Johnston, the feminist writer who reviewed her first Carnegie Hall concert, in 1961, and Jonas Mekas, the film critic who received a "Voice and Instruments" credit in that concert's program. She reached up to embrace David Ross, the director of the Whitney Museum, whom she first met in 1971, when Ross, barely out of college, helped mount an exhibit of her work at the Everson Museum, in Syracuse. "She's like the older sister I always wanted," Ross said, recalling the hours he spent with Ono and Lennon at the St. Regis, where they lived then. "I'd call all my high-school friends and say, 'Guess where I am.' "



Yoko Ono and Sean Lennon

As the evening wore on, Sean Lennon, Ono's twenty-year-old son, arrived. Unlike his mother, who has close-cropped hair, he has a ponytail that stretches down his back. They fled the claustrophobic public space for the rear garden, to smoke cigarettes and discuss Ono's latest record album, for which Lennon's band, Ima, does the backup music. "I am honored that she gives me any input," Lennon said. "I am not so presumptuous as to give her criticism. She makes art on another level than most of us plebeians."

Later that night, when he took his leave, Ono told him, "Please remember the remix." He lowered his voice to talk about studio arrangements. "It's going to be a big fat bill if I rent out a multi . . ." He trailed off. Then he seemed to remember whose opening it was. "Congratulations," he said. "You look really beautiful. I love you."

DIVORCED FROM REALITY

THE freshman Republicans charged into the House of Representatives at the start of this year determined to purify the world, with an agenda that extended even to purging daytime-television talk shows of gamy personal revelations. But now some of the most vociferous advocates of conservative "family values" have themselves become candidates to be guests on the talk shows. "They're in the news. They're the newsmakers," Diane Rappoport, the executive producer of "The Maury Povich Show," said the other day. "You're talking about relationships, the breakdown of marriages."

The first talk-show panel might feature the Waldholtzes, from Utah. Enid Greene Waldholtz, class of '94, has been among Speaker Newt Gingrich's chosen family-values crusaders and was named to the powerful Rules Committee. But suddenly, on November 11th, Enid's husband, Joe, who had served as her campaign treasurer, disappeared. While the F.B.I. searched for him, a grand jury deliberated alleged check-kiting in the Waldholtzes' accounts. Enid issued a press release headlined "CONGRESSWOMAN WALDHOLTZ FILES FOR DIVORCE FROM MISSING HUSBAND" and went into seclusion. A week after disappearing, Joe turned himself in. The Justice Department has reportedly begun investigating Enid for perjury and falsifying financial records.

THE second tabloid-talk-show panel starring a House freshman might feature the Christensens, from Nebraska. Jon Christensen campaigned against abortion and the "mainstreaming" of the homosexual life style, and for creationism. When his pro-choice opponent (a Presbyterian) appeared at a Catholic church, Christensen, an evangelical Protestant, said that the Democrat had no right to attend "a Catholic event." What really carried Christensen to victory, however, was the largesse of his wife, Meredith, whose father had been an associate of Lamar Hunt. According to the Omaha *World Herald,* at the Press Club Ball this March she wowed the crowd by singing a song, to the tune of "I Will Follow Him":

I will follow him
Follow him right on to Washington.
His right hand I will always be.
My Jon will make everyone see
It is his destiny.
I love him, I love him, I love him.
And where he goes
I'll follow, I'll follow, I'll follow.
He'll always have my money, my money,
  my money
As long as I'm his honey, his honey, his
  honey.

But on November 12th, Jon Christensen filed for divorce, while Meredith attached an affidavit declaring: "I regret the fact that during our marriage I have engaged in marital infidelity." Local legal experts had never seen such an admission, because Nebraska is a no-fault-divorce state.

Diane Rappoport would like both couples to appear on "The Maury Povich Show." "We would depict them exactly as they are," she said. "We don't like to impose our viewpoint on them." If Joe Waldholtz appeared as a guest, she said, the caption beneath his image might read, "Husband: Accused of Embezzling." Enid's caption might be "Congresswoman: Divorcing Husband She Accuses of Embezzling." Jon Christensen's might read, "Congressman: Believes in Family Values." And Meredith's might be "Wife: Admits Adultery."

"But I don't think they'll be talking right now," Rappoport said. "It's not in their best interests."

LOOKING OUT FOR "NUMBER 1"

JACKSON POLLOCK'S famous, breakthrough painting "Number 1, 1952," all dripped-and-poured-oil-and-enamel, "no beginning and no end," 23¾ inches by 106⅞ inches of it, had rested comfortably for forty-three years in the possession of Frank Stanton—the former famous, breakthrough No. 2 to the late No. 1, William Paley, at CBS—until it was sold by Christie's the other day.

In 1952, Stanton and his wife, Ruth, saw "Number 1" at Pollock's first one-man show, at the Sidney Janis Gallery. "I lost my heart to it," Stanton recalled just before the sale. "In both materials and style, it was *free*, so *free*. I said to Ruth, 'Gee, maybe we ought to buy this.' Her heart always was first and foremost with Tiffany lamps, but she went along with me."

Stanton paid what he described as a "nothing price" for "Number 1," which was hung over a fireplace in the apartment the Stantons, who had no children, then lived in with their dog, a Lakeland terrier named Mr. Cricket, and with Ruth's Tiffany glass. In 1956, the year Pollock was killed in an automobile crash, the Stantons moved into a handsome, four-story Georgian house; they installed "Number 1" in their second-floor library, where it stayed for decades. Frank Stanton would give the painting a look every time he came home from serving Paley and trying—as he went from radio to television—to keep CBS free. In 1971, for example, Stanton had to fight Congress. He appeared before a televised congressional hearing on his refusal to hand over to Congress all the scripts and outtakes CBS had used for a broadcast, "The Selling of the Pentagon," that exposed the way the Pentagon was using public funds to promote various military activities. Ultimately, the House killed a proposed citation for contempt of Congress against Stanton and CBS. "The government wanted to be looking over our shoulder, trying to second-guess our editing," Stanton said. "I couldn't let them fool around with our freedom."

Since retiring from CBS, in 1973, at the company's then mandatory age of sixty-five, Stanton has been, among other things, chairman of the American Red Cross, an overseer of Harvard College, and a board member of Lincoln Center and of this and that corporation, and he and his wife raised a new Lakeland terrier, named Mr. Cricket II. They also acquired, along with other treats, three Henry Moore sculptures, three Giacomettis, a Hans Hofmann, a couple of Dubuffets, considerable Majorelle and Mies van der Rohe furniture, and thirty Tiffany lamps. Jackson Pollock's "Number 1" stayed in place. Ruth would admire her husband as he admired what Pollock had done and the way he had done it, but, Frank said, "The thing she liked best about the house was the dog."

Three years ago, Ruth Stanton died. "My world collapsed," Frank said, standing tall in front of the bookshelves where the Pollock had hung. Near him lay his current dog, Foxo, a three-year-old Welsh corgi, for whose particular variety, Pembroke, he has named his charitable foundation, the Pembroke Fund. Recently, he has been making gifts left and right: a Mark Rothko to the Fogg Art Museum; two Tiffany windows to the Met; a Robert Cronbach bronze of Ruth's head to the Art Institute in Dayton, Ohio, where Frank and Ruth grew up and met when both were fourteen.

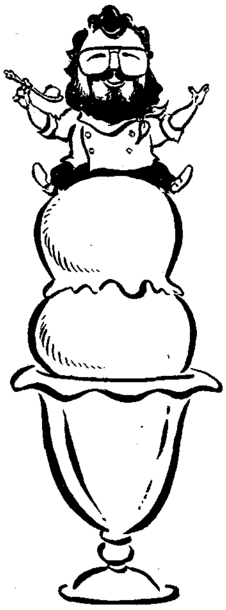
Stanton is now eighty-seven years old. His hair is still the same naturally blond

"Something that dazzles but doesn't say 'Forever.'"

color it was on the day he bought the Pollock. His voice is the same, too—strong, deep, and resonant, like a practiced radio announcer of old. Stanton was wearing brown Peal shoes, a Turnbull & Asser multistriped shirt, a handsome brown tweed Savile Row suit that he bought in London in 1959 and that still had the label with the date and the tailor's name in the pocket, and gold cuff links with the CBS eye. He seemed to be the same as always—immaculate, energetic, infinitely organized, infinitely restrained. He said, matter-of-factly, "Christie's was here, and they wanted to take everything in the house, and the house itself, but the only things I gave them to sell were the Hofmann, the Pollock, the Majorelle furniture, and all thirty of the Tiffany lamps."

The Pollock was sold to an uptown gallery. Stanton said that his heart went with the painting, but he didn't need to know who would ultimately buy it. He said, "Anybody who would spend millions for 'Number 1' would certainly understand what it meant to be free and would love the painting and take good care of it."

OF BYTES AND BITES



Nathan Myhrvold

When Nathan Myhrvold, a thirty-six-year-old group vice-president at Microsoft (and C.E.O. Bill Gates's right-hand nerd and his co-author on their new book, "The Road Ahead"), isn't worrying about how to stay a step ahead of the Internet, he spends a good deal of time thinking about more down-to-earth matters, such as ice cream. "There's a couple of problems with ice cream," Myhrvold said over lunch at Lespinasse recently. "The texture is the first problem. It's great when it comes out of the ice-cream maker, but then you put it in the freezer and it changes consistency. The other problem is that, if you make it at home, there's too much or too little. It goes to waste, or to your waist—to one waste or another."

Myhrvold discovered the solution to the ice-cream quandary during a previous visit to Lespinasse, where the chef, Gray Kunz, has installed a technologically advanced kitchen. "This machine Gray has has these stainless-steel cylinders," Myhrvold explained, his voice rising in pitch with excitement. "You make your ice cream, put it in the cylinders, and throw it in the freezer. It's hard as a Popsicle. Then you put it in this machine, and a steel blade shaves and chops it and pumps air in it. Having people over and being able to serve three or four smooth sorbets is pretty cool." Myhrvold was feeling pretty cool himself, having just returned from a weekend in Paris, where he attended a restaurant-equipment show and found himself one of these cutting-edge ice-cream makers for his home, in Seattle.

Myhrvold has the fair, smooth skin and small nose of a child. His light-brown beard, large spectacles, and dark suit give him the air of a kid dressed up for Halloween. He has a Ph.D. in theoretical and mathematical physics and a master's in mathematical economics, both from Princeton, and he worked as a postdoc on quantum gravity with Stephen Hawking, at Cambridge. He has pursued formula-car racing, photography, bungee jumping, and skydiving. His one lifelong interest, however, is food. Recently, he decided that he needed some formal training (not that he has ever taken a class in computer science), so he set his sights on an intensive three-week course in French cooking techniques, intended for food professionals, at La Varenne, in Burgundy. To qualify for the class, he needed restaurant experience, so he enlisted as a part-time assistant chef at Rover's, in Seattle, and spent a day every week or two boning rabbits, making sauces, and decorating plates. This fall, he took the course at La Varenne, where he not only honed his skills but also met some experts who could turn him on to new equipment.

A technologically advanced kitchen will be the centerpiece of a house that Myhrvold is planning, for himself, his wife, and their six-year-old twins, on Lake Washington, in suburban Seattle, about a half mile from the gargantuan Gates edifice under construction. "Probably the closest thing to it is a three-star restaurant in Paris," he said. "I say Paris because they have smaller kitchens." Myhrvold admits that he's "a much better group vice-president than chef," but the kitchen is the best place for him to come down from virtual reality. "With cooking, you're making something very tangible," he said. "Cleaning a duck or trussing a hog has a very earthy sort of appeal that you just can't get from technology."

NO PEEKING

A number of unwelcome visitors have been browsing the Benetton at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Fifty-third Street, where folded sweaters line the walls like soft, rainbowlike bricks. "The store's been kind of quiet this fall," explains Elena DiLauro, a petite sales assistant with shiny black hair. "One of the biggest surprises we've had are the baby-blues—baby-blue sweaters, jackets, dresses. The sales have been unreal. That, and the Peeping Toms. We've had *a lot* of Peeping Toms, actually, loitering outside the dressing-room area. They're getting to be a serious problem."

Unlike the prototypical fitting areas in department stores (long, hidden alleys, invariably ill lit), the changing area in the Fifty-third Street Benetton is more of a blond-wood atrium. Curtained stalls are visible along the back wall of the store, and in front of them is an open area where shoppers can emerge for an outside opinion. This has encouraged a communal atmosphere among shoppers—as well as some unwanted rubbernecking.

"We carry very few men's items," DiLauro says. "So when a man comes into the store and starts shuffling around, we know we may have a problem on our hands. There are different ways of dealing with it: you follow him around, you keep asking him if he wants help. Last week, I got so fed up with this one guy that I said, as loudly as I could, 'Ladies, could you please make sure your curtains are tightly drawn? We have wandering eyes in the store.' That guy, at least, got the message. He hasn't been back since." ♦

"The Press v. the Courts," James Traub; "Family Affair," M. G. Lord; "Divorced from Reality," Sidney Blumenthal; "Looking Out for 'Number 1,'" Lillian Ross; "Of Bytes and Bites," Arthur Lubow; "No Peeking," Lauren MacIntyre.

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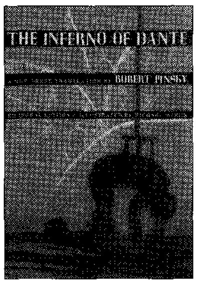

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LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

GRANDMA VERSUS THE KIDS

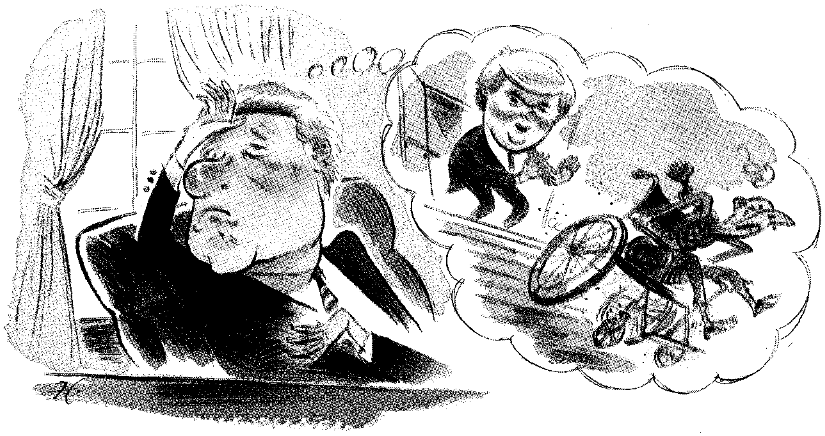
Guess what the budget battle is really about.

BY MICHAEL KELLY

SINCE Colin Powell bowed out before he was even in, it has become the fashion in the political press to dismiss the 1996 Presidential race as a dull affair. It will be a straightforward matchup between the overly known quantities of Bill Clinton and Bob Dole, and will be enlivened only by politics' quadrennial sideshow acts—Jesse and Pat breathing fire while Ross the Human Dogboy rolls about in the sawdust barking and biting his hindquarters. The great and sordid, momentous and petty, dramatic and comic spectacle of the federal government beating itself nearly senseless for the last two weeks has given the lie to this dreary scenario.

The brawl between the Democratic White House and the Republican Congress over the shape of the federal budget was the first and defining round of the 1996 general-election contest. This initial confrontation has made it clear that the larger fight will feature as high a degree of savagery, demagoguery, and burlesque as anyone could ask for—perhaps more, even, than some would ask for.

The reason has to do with what political professionals call "intensity." Intensity is the measure of the passion with which voters attach themselves to a particular political party, and it can be vital in a close election. "The more intense your voters are, the fewer resources you have to spend to turn them out, and the more you can spend on winning swing voters," the Republican pollster Ed Goeas says. "We benefitted from intensity in '94. The Democrats benefitted from it in '95." The question now is who benefits in 1996.



For Bill Clinton, Newt Gingrich's threat to shut down the government over a Medicare hike was a great, shining gift.

GARY HOVLAND

What builds intensity? Well, love can do it. A candidate who stirs great natural affection needs little else. But it does appear that the principal candidates in 1996 are going to be Clinton and Dole. All right, then—in the absence of love—what builds intensity? Fear, of course. Fear of the alternative. The two primal fears in American politics are: (1) that Democrats will perpetually increase taxes to the point where they drive the nation and you into penury because they cannot stop spending money on utopian dreams and vote-buying schemes; and (2) that Republicans will happily sacrifice your health, education, and welfare in order to enrich themselves and the other fellas down at the country club. These contrasting perceptions have driven American politics since the New Deal.

What began last April with Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich's promise to wreck the train of government unless the Democratic President signed on to a Republican balanced-budget deal set up a prolonged dance of move and countermove, in which each party sought to position itself as the voters' protection against the ur-fear of the other—and to manipulate the other into positions that would reinforce that fear. "The conflict boils down to whether balancing the budget trumps Medicare," said William Kristol, the Republican strategist and the editor of *The Weekly Standard*, a conservative political magazine. "To use the language of each side, the question is whether bankrupting our children trumps throwing Grandma out in the street."

The first round of maneuvering ended last week in an agreement between the White House and Congress to pass an essentially Republican balanced-budget plan by the year 2002, provided that Congress insures "adequate" levels of spending on the social programs that the Democrats favor. The result was intentionally inconclusive, with each side claiming success once it had inflicted the desired damage on the other. The Republicans were able to crow that they had forced the Democratic White House to commit to an honest course of budget reduction, thus rewarding the children of America, as Speaker Gingrich expressed it in his victory remarks, "with a chance to have a future in which they're not going to be crushed by debt and taxation and high interest rates." The Democrats were able to brag, as President Clinton put it in *his* victory statement, that they had made the Republican Congress accept the principles of balancing the budget "without forcing unacceptable cuts in health care, education, and the environment on the American people."

As the round ended, strategists on both sides expressed satisfaction over the way things had gone. "Some people are going to say this is the politics of anger, the politics of fear, but the point is that all this can produce is a big election about a big thing," said James Carville, the Washington political consultant who managed Clinton's campaign in 1992 and is helping shape his reëlection effort now. "Already now, people are being confronted with what it means to balance a budget. It is being brought home every day what this means. And our job is to keep the focus on this. I think the

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"I like this fight," echoed Mary Matalin—George Bush's deputy campaign manager in 1992—when I smoked her out at the Virginia farm she shares with her husband, Carville. "I think the government closing and all the theatrics attendant to it has kept the debate where it is good for us. The élite media were all freaked out about the government closing, but I don't know that anybody else was. . . . I don't think the great unwashed care about the government shutting down. And in the end they are talking about balancing the budget, and, to the extent that the discussion stays on that, that's good for us. You always want to be fighting on your own turf."

The budget fight of November, 1995, can be traced to the Republican imperative of the Contract with America on September 27, 1994. On that day, Gingrich and his Republican followers pledged themselves to balance the budget within seven years—one of the most significant promises in the Contract. By this fall, that promise had become critical. The Republicans had already failed to deliver on the passage of constitutional amendments mandating a balanced budget and limiting the tenure of members of Congress. And while the press was reporting that the public was growing apprehensive over the aggressiveness of the G.O.P. revolution, the Republicans' own polls suggested the opposite conclusion: the voters were losing patience with them for not achieving more. To keep their promise to balance the budget within seven years while also making good on their pledge of an election-year tax credit for families with children, the congressional Republicans needed revenue. There was one obvious pot of money available.

In 1990, Congress had translated Medicare beneficiaries' twenty-five-per-cent share of the cost of doctors' visits and lab tests into fixed-dollar amounts, projected over the next five years. But a decline in Medicare's over-all costs had resulted in the beneficiaries' share rising from twenty-five per cent to 31.5 per cent. In 1993, the Clinton Administration and the then Democratic Congress had mandated that the share be rolled back to twenty-five per cent. Thus, beneficiaries' premiums were scheduled to actually decrease in 1996, dropping from $46.10 a month to $42.50 a month. This fall, the Republicans proposed keeping the premiums at 31.5 per cent. That would have meant an immediate small rise in dollar terms on January 1st, to $53.50 per month, and by 2002 an increase to $87.60 per month.

As a matter of policy, the Republican desire to raise the premiums was not unreasonable. In fact, it is widely accepted that, with the strain on Medicare's resources created by the aging baby-boom generation, the premiums have to increase. The Clinton Administration's own budget proposals for the next seven years call for nearly doubling the premiums, from $46.10 a month to $82.80—only about five dollars less than the Republican plan.

But the politics of Medicare is another matter. The Administration had structured its premium-increase plan so that it would not begin to take effect until 1997, after the election. Americans sixty-five and older would get a bonus in 1996, courtesy of the Democrats, and the impact of the President's own plan to raise the premiums would not be felt until after he had been reëlected. If the Republicans could force Clinton to keep the premiums at 31.5 per cent, they would deny him his election-year cut—and also conceal their own election-year increase. This is because Medicare premiums are deducted from beneficiaries' monthly Social Security checks, and since Social Security payments are scheduled for a 2.6-per-cent cost-of-living increase on January 1st, the rise in Medicare payments would be hidden by the over-all rise in Social Security payments. The checks that people receive would still be larger than they were this year, even after the Medicare deductions. On the other hand, if the rollback to twenty-five per cent proceeded on schedule this fall, the Republicans would either have to forgo the revenue that they needed or try to raise the premiums in 1996. Older voters would have seen their Medicare payments decrease and then, in an election year, increase.

On November 13th, after failing to pass (by the fiscal-year deadline of September 30th) all thirteen appropriation bills necessary to fund the government's operations for another year, the Republican Congress sent Clinton a continuing resolution that would have enabled the government to remain open. Attached to the bill was a provision cancelling the scheduled decrease in Medicare premiums. "The House Republicans talked themselves into thinking they had to do it," Kristol told me. "They started believing their own press releases, believing they could ram anything they wanted down the President's throat. . . . I think Gingrich always thought Clinton would blink—that the Republicans had the leverage, and that Clinton would sign in the end. It was a tactical error. They believed their own talk that the President was irrelevant."

Gingrich and company miscalculated on three counts. First, the Republicans failed to take into account Clinton's own shifting dynamic. To counteract a reputation for vacillation—one that had been recently, and embarrassingly, underscored by ill-considered confessions that he regretted his own 1993 tax increases—the President needed an opportunity to appear to be a man of conviction and decisiveness. Second, the Republicans neglected to consider that in Bill Clinton they would be facing one of the most perversely effective demagogues in politics. As George Bush could have told them, Clinton has a devastating talent for attack—a gift for statements that are inoffensive in their delivery, subtle in their disingenuousness, and brutal in their force. Third, and probably most damaging, the Republicans ignored the degree to which their chest-thumping radicalism had heightened the old anxieties among the electorate over a Republican assault on social-welfare programs—especially Medicare.

The Democrats, however, were highly attuned to the public's apprehensions. In gubernatorial races in Florida in 1994

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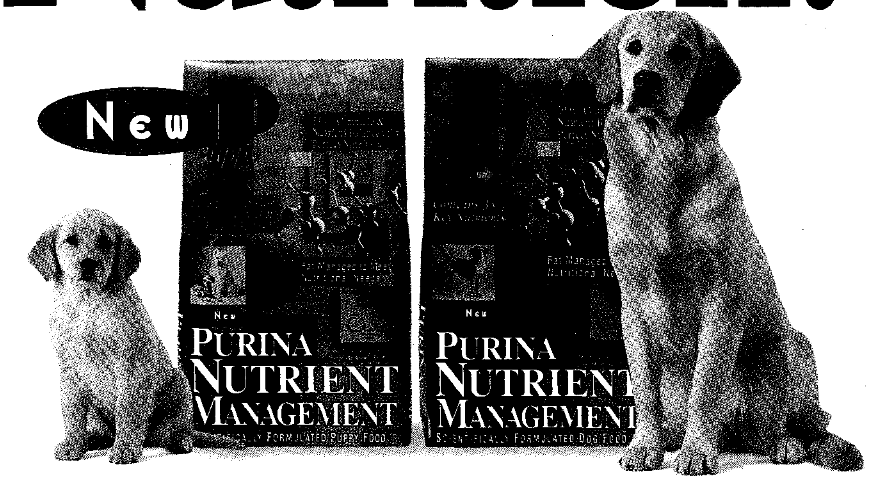
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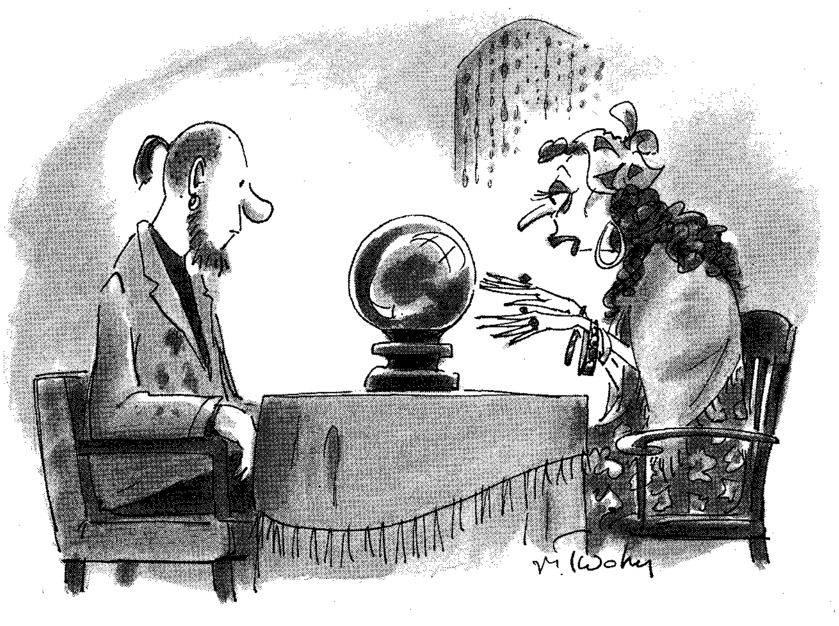

"I don't see the Whitney, but Mary Boone will send you a Christmas card."

• •

and in Kentucky in 1995 Democrats won narrow victories after campaigns that dwelled heavily on the theme of the Republican threat to Medicare. In the Florida contest, between the Democratic incumbent governor, Lawton Chiles, and the Republican challenger, Jeb Bush, a Washington political-consulting firm hired by the Chiles campaign had callers telephone at least thirty-eight thousand elderly registered voters in the last seventy-two hours of the race, employing what turned out to be an effective scare tactic. "Hello, I am calling on behalf of the Florida Association of Senior Citizens," the callers read from their scripts, invoking the name of a legitimate organization, but one that had no connection with the Chiles campaign. "We're calling to let you know that Jeb Bush is no friend to seniors. Jeb Bush's running mate wants to abolish Social Security and calls Medicare a welfare program that should be cut." Chiles beat Bush in the closest gubernatorial race in Florida's history.

In this year's Kentucky gubernatorial race, between the Democratic lieutenant governor, Paul Patton, and a Republican attorney, Larry Forgy, Medicare-scare tactics again played a large part in the Democratic victory. In that election, the local Democratic Party and the Democratic National Committee worked with the Washington firm of Squier Knapp Ochs to develop a series of television commercials warning voters that "in Washington, Republicans are cutting Medicare, doubling premiums, and cutting student loans and scholarships." The campaign also claimed, "The Republicans want to eliminate Medicare. They never believed in Medicare. And now they want it to wither on the vine." Tom Ochs, a partner in the firm that produced the commercials, told me that they had a great impact because they reinforced preëxisting perceptions of Republican heartlessness. "People believe that Republicans are cold, rich, interested in helping themselves, and uninterested in helping others," Ochs said. "We used Medicare as something voters instinctively agreed with—that Republicans were trying to screw them out of their Medicare. This issue is potent because voters do believe, down to their bones, that if Republicans just had the chance they *would* screw people out of Medicare and Social Security."

In the last days of the race, the Kentucky Democratic Party paid for a telephone blitz similar to the one that had worked so well for Chiles. "We had phone banks in a hundred and thirteen of a hundred and twenty counties in Kentucky," Terry McBrayer, the state Democratic chairman and a chief strategist for the Patton campaign, said. "We tried to call every single senior who had voted in three out of the last five elections." McBrayer said the callers worked from a script that went something like this: "Hello, we're calling on behalf of the senior citizens of Kentucky, and we want to tell you the Democrats are opposed to slashing Medicare, and we want to get your help on this, to get to the polls and stop the Republicans from slashing Medicare." Patton beat Forgy by less than twenty-three thousand votes. McBrayer attributes the slim victory, in large part, to the intensity-raising power of the Medicare issue, which, he says, was "by far the most important" one in motivating traditional Democratic voters to turn out against the Republican candidate. "The white-haired people of Kentucky are scared," he said.

For Clinton and the Democrats, Gingrich's Medicare gambit was a great, shining gift, an opportunity to exploit the very issue that recent experience had taught them was their most potent fear-raiser—and to put the President at center stage as the savior of America's elderly. The Democrats went immediately on the attack. The President's radio address of November 11th set the tone. Accusing the Republicans of attempting to "violate our basic values as a nation," Clinton went on to say, "Imagine the Republican Congress as a banker and the United States as a family that has to go to the bank for a short-term loan for a family emergency. The banker says to the family, 'I'll give you the loan, but only if you'll throw the grandparents and the kids out of the house first.' Well, speaking on behalf of the family, I say, no thanks."

Even before the government shut down, the Democrats were conjuring up images of the Republicans as radical extremists, and even as terrorists. "The Republicans will tell you that this is their big revolution," the House Minority Leader, Richard Gephardt, said. "And I suppose that's true. What they won't tell you is that sometimes revolutions claim millions of innocent lives." As the standoff developed, the rhetoric became more incendiary, with Gephardt accusing the G.O.P. of "trying to hold the whole country hostage," of "threatening to basically blow up the government," and of using "blackmail and bomb-throwing."

The Administration came up with inventive ways to increase the anxiety level. On November 15th, for instance, the President solemnly announced that the Secretary of the Treasury had "been

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forced today to take extraordinary but necessary actions" to counteract the Republican Congress's failure "to ensure that the government can meet its obligations, including paying next month's Social Security benefits." In fact, Social Security beneficiaries receive checks drawn from a trust fund that is not affected by congressional appropriations, and they never faced even the possibility of an interruption in their payments. "There is absolutely not any danger," the spokesman for the Social Security Administration, Phil Gambino, told me. "The Social Security trust funds have a five-hundred-billion-dollar account in reserve."

By then, the battered Republicans had already begun to abandon their fight on the Medicare premiums. By turning the conversation away from the Democrats' primal-fear issue, Republican meanness, to the Republicans' primal-fear issue, Democratic fiscal recklessness, the G.O.P. hoped to reverse its massive public-relations losses, which were reflected in almost every major poll. "The President has shown no willingness—zero willingness—to get to a balanced budget," Gingrich proclaimed.

But here the Speaker was doing some demagoguing of his own. As Gingrich well knew, Clinton's refusal to lie down and accept all the Republican demands at this early point in the bargaining did not necessarily mean that he would be unwilling to deal forthrightly with the balanced-budget issue down the road. The deadlock over the continuing resolution to fund government operations was nothing but a skirmish. The real negotiations lay ahead, in the debate over the bill to establish the federal budget for fiscal 1996. It would have been irresponsible, not to mention politically suicidal, for Clinton to have retreated from his party's positions before the serious talks had even begun.

The Republicans knew, however, that Clinton could no more sustain the heat for keeping the government shut down over the balanced-budget issue than they could over the Medicare issue. "He is now at risk of being seen as the one person in America blocking the way to a balanced budget," Kristol said just before the standoff ended. "Having established that he was saving Medicare from those mean Republicans, he probably should have moved to cut a deal already." On the evening of Novem-

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ber 19th, the sixth day of the shutdown, the President did just that.

THE clue to what lies ahead is in the wording of the agreement between the White House and Congress. It is, in a political sense, lovely language, perfect in its adaptability to the needs of both parties. "The President and the Congress shall enact legislation . . . to achieve a balanced budget no later than fiscal year 2002, as estimated by the Congressional Budget Office," the agreement declares, "and the President and the Congress agree that the balanced budget must protect future generations, ensure Medicare solvency, reform welfare, and provide adequate funding for Medicaid, education, agriculture, national defense, veterans and the environment."

Skeptics note that the agreement resembles lace more than it does cast iron. Its encompassing flexibility means that neither side is really committed to anything except further negotiations, scheduled to begin this week. Almost immediately, the White House and Congress started sniping at each other, chipping away at their brand-new deal.

But this posturing masks the great desire on both sides to fulfill the promises of the language of November 19th—to strike a deal that will allow Dole to say that he forced a Democratic President to balance the budget and Clinton to say that he forced a Republican Congress to back down from its efforts to savage the old, the young, the weak, the halt, and Mother Nature. To be sure, Clinton can reject a balanced budget and run in 1996 as the man who stopped the Republicans from throwing Grandma out on the street. But how much better to run as the man who balanced the budget *and* saved Grandma. The Republicans can reject the White House's demands, and Dole can run as the man who damn near stopped the Democrats from bankrupting the children. But how much better to run as the man who saved the children *without* evicting Grandma. Look for peace by Christmas. ♦

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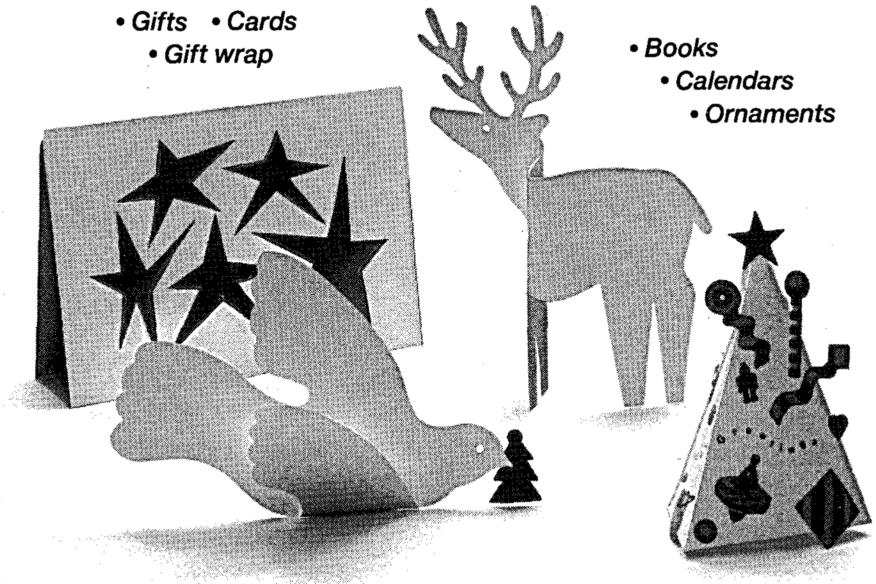

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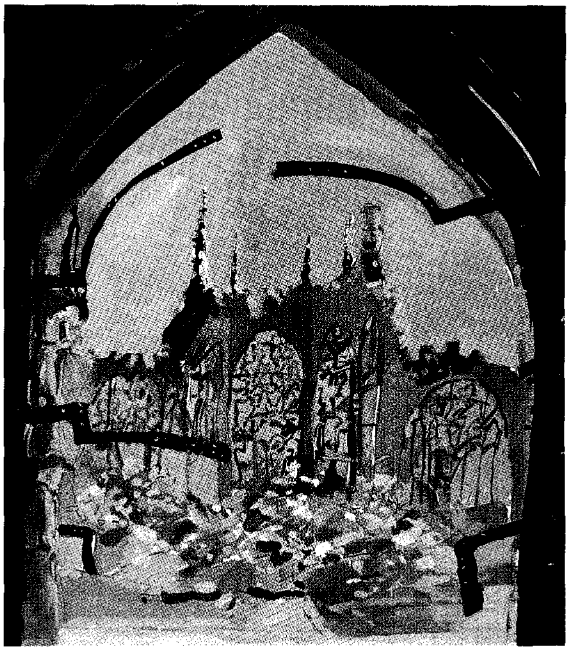
ANNALS OF RELIGION

STRAYING FROM THE WAY

Why did David Hare's new play rattle England? It shows another great British institution adrift.

BY KENNEDY FRASER

I SOMETIMES think, when I contemplate England—where I grew up—that the prevailing religion is a kind of domesticated pantheism: a communion with shrubberies and rockeries, with the song thrush at the birdbath, with the look in the eye of a reliably well-behaved dog. Even the landscape seems to have been molded into a paradisial national theme park. Great masses of British tourists tramp through places of natural beauty the way people in Chaucer's day used to visit Christian shrines. Especially favored are places that have been elevated and set apart from the actual by having appeared first in literature and then on television: Hardy's Wessex, Wordsworth's Lakes, Herriot's Dales.



Bombed-out Coventry: Its rebuilding was the Church of England's first and last big modern moment.

ROBERT ANDREW PARKER

Late-twentieth-century Britain is a post-Christian country as well as a post-imperial one. Two-thirds of its population has no discernible religion. While half the people in America are regular churchgoers, only about ten per cent of the English are. (The figures are different in Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales.) The millions who trek in homage through the English country landscape would be greatly upset if it did not include medieval churches with heavenward-pointing spires, but the upkeep of these landmarks is left to the ever-dwindling subgroup of the ten per cent that answers the summons of the Church of England's bells.

The echo of the bells is being heard in New York this season, with Joanna Trollope's "The Choir" having just wound down on PBS, and with the National Theatre production of David Hare's "Racing Demon" set to run until after Christmas at Lincoln Center. (As if in deference to its ticklish history with Rome, the English Church held back until the little white-haired figure in his magic hat was done with praying in the Park and the Popemobile had vanished around the corner.) Trollope's version of the Church is familiar enough. She is content to paint it much as her ancestor Anthony, the Victorian novelist, painted it: as a stage set for dramas about money, property, marriage, and tribal politics. She adds sex and the semi-showbiz musical tingle of a choirboy treble, for a mixture that is a delicious sort of dog-collared "Dallas." Hare's work is naturally a more substantial proposition, and a more disquieting one—to the English, at least. Those unfamiliar with the Anglican Church on its home turf may find themselves puzzled by why it was that "Racing Demon" stirred up so much feeling when it appeared in London in 1990. It is the first part of a trilogy that includes plays about Britain's legal system and its political life. A friend of Hare's observed

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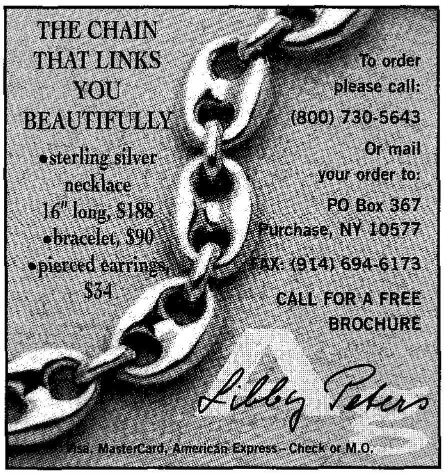

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that the playwright had had the luck to complete his study of British institutions "at precisely that moment when [they] were finally admitted to be in a state of collapse."

The reasons for that collapse are complex: the dismantling of public-sector structures over many years by a radical "conservative" government, on the one hand; the crumbling of the hidebound old class hierarchies, on the other. It would scarcely be surprising if a religion shaped for a very English God showed signs of strain now that England has nothing outside itself to rule or conquer. In England even more than here, you feel the sense of a culture coming to an end. The English are restless (a recent newspaper poll claimed that more than forty per cent of them would emigrate if they had the nerve), yet even when they are at home they give an impression of being homesick. The baton of the English literary tradition is often said to have passed to writers with roots in Britain's former colonies. Somewhere in the childhood homes and schools of these vigorous "others," as like as not, were Donne and Dickens, the King James Bible, and the sixteenth-century prayer book of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer. The literary beauty of this prayer book—"We have erred, and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts," the Confession reads—did not save its author from being burned at the stake. Nor has that beauty prevented its frequent replacement in English parish churches by a dreary, depoeticized modern liturgy that can strike the handful of loyal churchgoers as a kind of penance.

The Anglican Church in the land of its origin seems a more attenuated, self-doubting organization than the Episcopal Church or other worldwide offshoots. "Many of the clergy I've met have a pervasive melancholy—a sadness," David Hare told me recently. "You see it in their clothes. In their personal relationships." At the heart of "Racing Demon" is an inner-city vicar named Lionel, whose future is at risk from his superior, a ruthless, power-driven bishop bent on efficiency; from the zealotry of an evangelical young colleague who sees him as an obstacle to progress; and from his own vaguely liberal-humanist, almost willfully undynamic brand of faith. In "Asking

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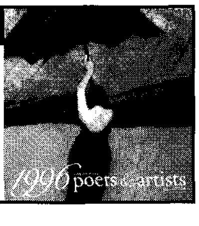

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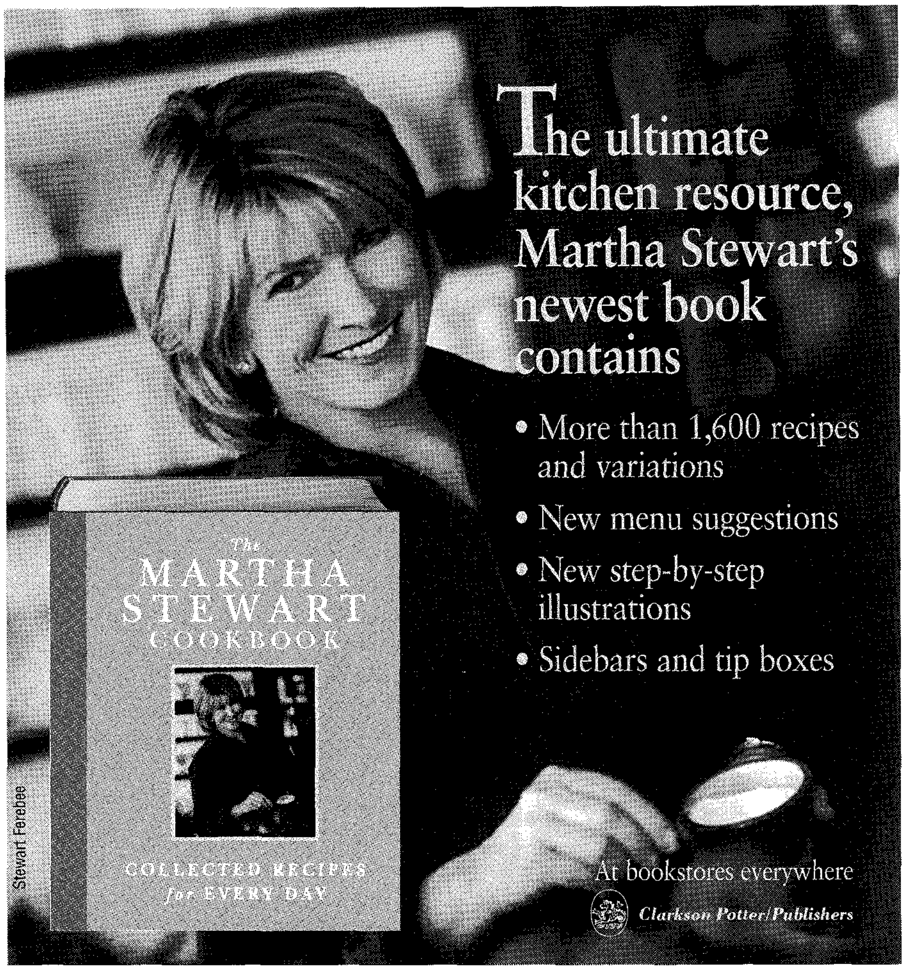
Around," a book of interviews Hare conducted as background for the trilogy, he observes that "Racing Demon" has been seen as a metaphor for a variety of quite secular institutions. Even so, the playwright was keen to get at something more than politics and the way decent, complicated people are vulnerable to being downsized by the single-minded. He wanted to write about what his characters actually believed. But pinning down many of the clergymen he interviewed on the details of their faith turned out to be extraordinarily difficult. Hare had a hard time getting priests to talk to him about God.

"Are you interested in doctrine at all?" the apparently exasperated Hare asked a vicar who had been speaking vaguely about creating a "quiet, meditative atmosphere" in his services.

"Not much," the priest replied.

LIKE many people from England, I was sprinkled by the Established Church before I could toddle. As a baby, I was baptized by an ancient country vicar called Mr. Mann. He died very shortly afterward, and was laid to rest under a yew tree in his own churchyard, next to a young curate who had fallen from his horse in the age of Queen Anne. Mr. Mann would have had remarkable autonomy in his parish as well as lifetime tenure; now, as "Racing Demon" makes clear, many priests are at the mercy of short-term contracts.

Only a few years after my christening, I was sent both to an Anglican Sunday school and on weekdays to a nursery school run by a formidable and bosomy Theosophist named Miss Kenderdine. She was a staunch member of a society called The Round Table, and was a great friend of its Chief Knight. My head, the hair just long enough for braids, was filled with English mysticism and Arthurian legend. I learned to read from letters cut out of sandpaper and to lisp the motto "Live Pure, Speak True, Right Wrong, Follow the King." We took part in something called the Bread and Salt Ceremony, which felt very sacred. After Miss Kenderdine's, all the rest of my schooldays—like those of most pupils, whether in state-run schools, such as the one I attended, or in private schools, such as one attended by my sister—began with the whole school assembled to pray and then sing from the Anglican hymnbook. (Ro-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man Catholics, as they were always called, and pupils of the Jewish faith—which was never mentioned—were excused; in the fifties and the sixties, in contrast to the present, there were few Muslims or Hindus in British schools.) "Hast thou not seen / All that is needful hath been / Granted in what he ordaineth?" we girls, in our striped ties, would warble. Miss Box and Miss Pedley and Miss Palmer—their tweed skirts bagging at the knees in ostrich-egg shapes from thrusting along on bicycles—droned on up above us, on the teachers' platform.

During the fifties, as Providence would have it, I witnessed the Church of England's first and last great modern moment: the building of Coventry Cathedral. It was fabulous, for a while. If England is a secular country, Coventry—the Midlands town where I grew up—is a particularly secular corner of it. "A restless boom town still searching for its soul," a reporter from London wrote back then: a description that gave you the thrill of recognition if you lived in the place and also made you feel ashamed. He said the Church was aware that we represented its most important postwar challenge.

Since medieval times, Coventry had been a center of skilled manufacture. It was stolidly anti-Royalist during the civil war. For centuries, it put practicality and ingenuity before mystery and abstraction. Its civic leaders were not bishops or professors, and certainly were not lords and ladies, but, rather, were socialist aldermen and clever engineers. It made machines—bicycles, motorcycles, airplane engines, cars—and the machines to make machines. When the need arose, the city's factories could rapidly turn to making munitions. It grew and prospered so much during the First World War that it became an Anglican diocese in its own right. St. Michael's, a large old church used by the medieval guilds, in the Perpendicular Gothic style, was designated a cathedral.

In a single night in November, 1940, the homes and factories that had grown up side by side in Coventry were attacked by wave after wave of German bombers. Some five hundred of its citizens, the town center, and St. Michael's—except for a stone altar, walls, and steeple—were lost. The word "coventrate," for obliteration by saturation bombing, entered the language. The blackened ruin of the roofless, ogive-windowed church became a seminal image in the history of the Second World War. It appeared on the front page of the New York papers and is said to have swayed American public opinion in favor of supplying Churchill with arms. The Prime Minister was photographed with the ruin as backdrop, and so was King George VI. The King came again and again to Coventry, dropping in—like Hal on the eve of Agincourt—as his subjects got the factories going again and swept their shabby little houses free of broken glass.

After the war, Coventry began to rebuild and to prosper. The Hillmans and Humbers parked in streets and driveways were all made locally, and so were the double-decker buses I rode on my way to Miss Pedley and Miss Box. In the fifties and sixties, the number of Coventry car owners was higher than the national average: appropriately, since four out of five of its householders had recently come bowling in from somewhere else and perhaps (like my own parents) had it in the back of their minds to bowl right out again. The city council, bent on serving the exploding population with housing, hospitals, and libraries, was scarcely receptive when the idea of rebuilding the cathedral came up. Socialists from Nonconformist backgrounds, they had no sympathy for the Church of England, which they saw as supporting people with power and money; they called it "the Tory Party at prayer." (During the eighteenth century, the laboring poor had defected in droves to the "free" churches, especially Wesley's Methodism.) In spite of the councillors, the clergy and their allies launched plans to build a modern cathedral next to the ruin of the old, which was to remain as a visible reminder of the horrors of war.

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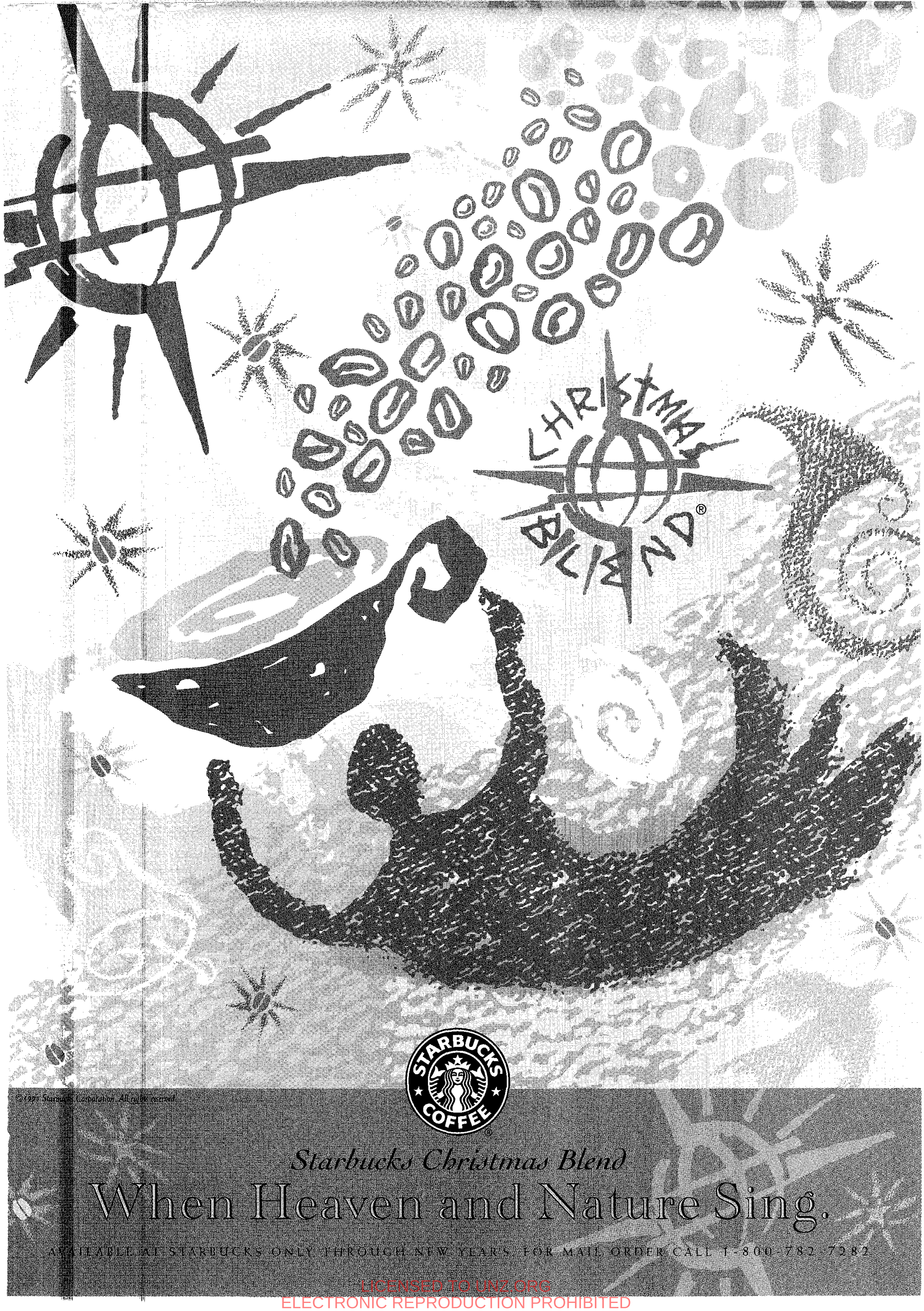
Basil Spence—a bearded Scot, who, like virtually everyone else connected with Coventry Cathedral, was subsequently knighted—won the competition to be the architect. He said that his airy, accordion-sided design in pink sandstone had appeared to him as a vision when he was coming around from the anesthetic in the dentist's chair. A brilliant showman and wit, he was well equipped to deal with the press conferences for the project, which continued to generate tremendous publicity for many years. He was an accredited architect of lost causes, having worked with Lutyens on the Viceroy's Palace in Delhi, completed just in time for the last Viceroy to move out.

The foundation stone was laid—on top of traces of a Benedictine abbey sacked in the time of Henry VIII—by a very young Queen Elizabeth II. The year was 1956, when England was humiliated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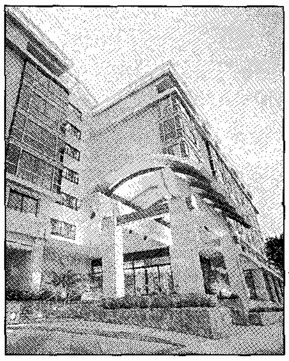
by America over Suez and effectively ceased to be a world power. (Prime Minister Harold Macmillan got through the tense days of the crisis by rereading "Northanger Abbey.") Britain casts up its anti-modernists in every generation. A "God-box," they called Spence's design, a "combination cinema and abattoir." Works of modern art were an integral part of the plans. Many of the most important British artists of the age were commissioned—including Graham Sutherland, a Roman Catholic, who designed an enormous tapestry of Christ in Glory, and Sir Jacob Epstein, a New York-born Jew, who created what turned out to be his last major piece, a sculpture of St. Michael vanquishing the Devil. It seems scarcely credible now, but the Cathedral provost felt it his duty to interrogate all the artists about their religion. "My beliefs are plain to see in my work," Sir Jacob said testily.

I was in my early teens (a time of sweet religious feelings) around the time of the consecration of the new church, in 1962. The Right Reverend Cuthbert Bardsley was then the Bishop of Coventry. He was very tall—height is always impressive in a bishop, what with the mitre and the processions—and had the old Etonian's confident manner. His sister, Miss Dorothy Bardsley, kept house for him and acted as his hostess. Before the war, he'd been close to Frank Buchman and the Oxford Group—a celebrity-packed spiritual movement that sought to return to first-century Christian principles and so change the world. The Bishop also had flair. (I remember once seeing a photograph of him and Buchman in Egypt, riding camels.) Apparently, he hadn't the remotest doubt that the building of Coventry Cathedral was an event of immense international significance. He had a sort of spiritual business plan: to heal the wounds of war by reaching out to German cities more severely devastated by our bombs than ours were by theirs; "to brighten the vision in the minds of the young of all nations"; and to make the cathedral a place where "the ordinary man" might feel comfortable and "men from Industry and Commerce" could get together.

The new cathedral was up to date in every way. It even had its own television studio. The clergy team was relatively young and very gifted. Simon Phipps, a handsome bachelor, who kept his hand-

The Right Decision.



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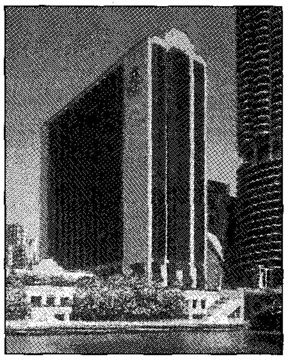

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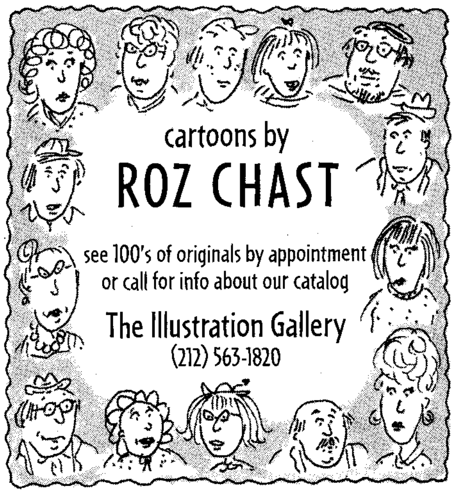

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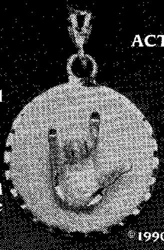

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CORRECTION

In the "Rhythms of the Caribbean" special advertising section (November 13, 1995), one of the program sponsors, the Caribbean Tourism Organization, was incorrectly listed as the Caribbean Tourism Association. Additionally, Reggae Sunsplash was incorrectly listed as being held July 12-15, 1996; it will instead be held August 1-4th in Ocho Rios, Jamaica. For more information, please call the Jamaica Tourist Board at 1-800-233-4582.

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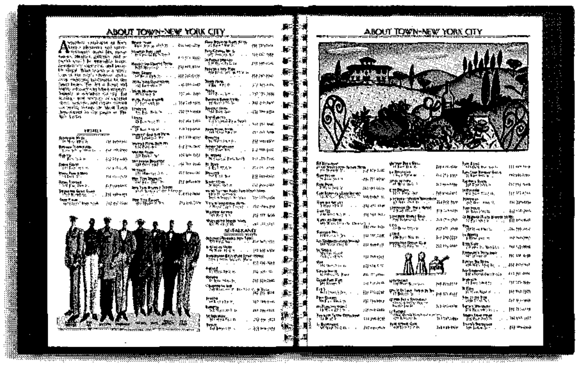
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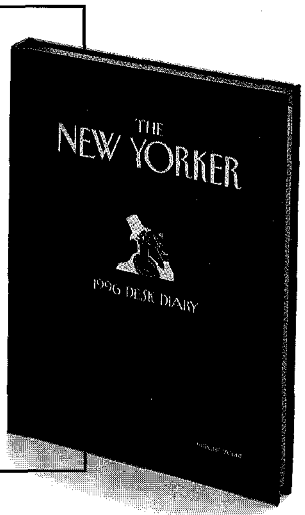
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1996 DESK DIARY

kerchief in his coat sleeve, like a Restoration earl, was named the Industrial Chaplain, with the factory shop floors as his mission. He chose to live in a flat in one of the new housing estates the council had been so keen to build. He was a great friend of the beautiful young Princess Margaret and godfather to her baby. Around the time of the consecration of the cathedral, she went to visit him at home. She was wearing a hat covered with pale petals and she looked like a flower herself. A little handbag hung on one arm, and the other arm was tucked into the arm of her handsome young husband, Mr. Armstrong-Jones. Every schoolgirl knew that she carried no money—she didn't need it, being royal—and that he was her second choice. She had had to give up her first love, Group Captain Townsend, because he was divorced. Still, there was something so *new* about the sight of this pair, trotting up that humble council path: so Beatles-and-Twiggy, so Mini-Cooper sixties, so self-assuredly anti-establishment.

ON Consecration Day, all the old English power structures were shining and on display as if in a doll's house: the Bishop, with his crozier and cope; the Lord Mayor, with his chain of office; the soldiers and policemen, saluting; the loyal subjects waving Union Jacks in the direction of the young Queen. She was at the center of the pageant in her dual role as head of the nation and of the Church, with the title—handed down from Henry VIII—Defender of the Faith. But in that beginning moment was an end, it turned out. Nothing as grand or as glamorous as the consecration of Coventry Cathedral was ever again within the Church of England's grasp—unless you count the weddings of Queen Elizabeth's children, which turned out to be a Faustian bargain for the Church. In exchange for their official prayers and avuncular blessings, the prelates gained worldwide television coverage of their spectacular costumes and age-old ceremonial skills. They allied themselves with attractive young people who might have been expected to bring the Church and the monarchy nothing but good. In retrospect, it seems clear that the balance tipped right there: that whereas the Queen had clearly been at the consecration to support an ecclesiastical venture,

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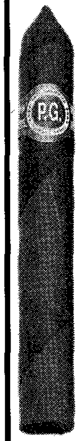
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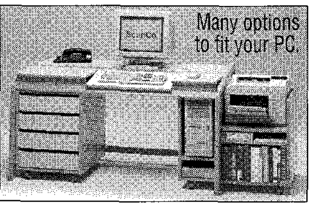
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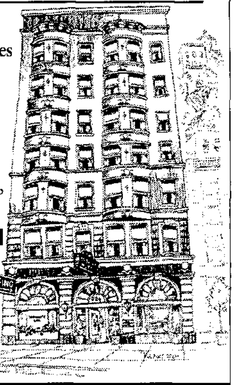
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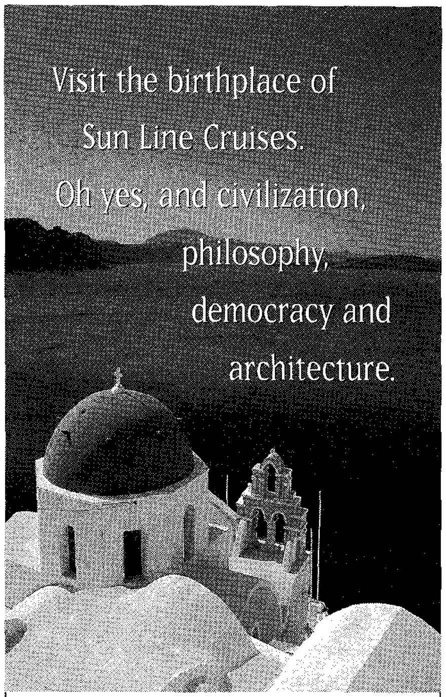

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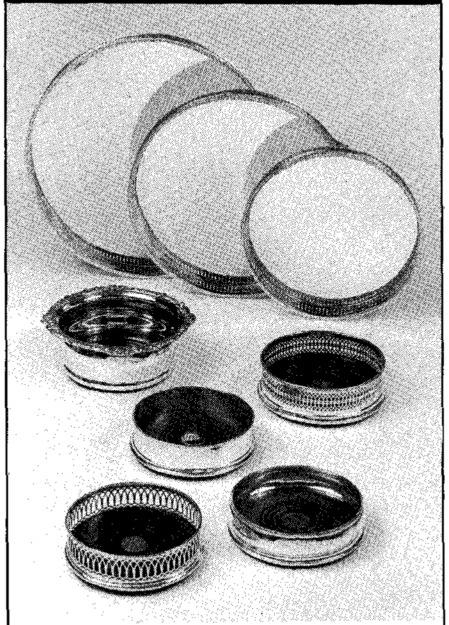

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feel black waters moving under your fingers,
that's real, all right, but the dancing you
would love to do, the sickly reeling
turn he makes as you duck away
with your lifted palm burning—
that's the mouth drawn tight
in the unkissed coffin;
that's all right, that's life.

You'll stroke him later
with everything the wild mind can conjure
and the same shy hand.

—LIZ ROSENBERG

the weddings showed archbishops who seemed to be the spiritual footmen of superstars.

No one in Britain, least of all its clergymen, could have predicted what would happen to the younger generation of the Royal Family: the whole rackety caravan of Charles-and-Diana and Andy-and-Fergie; of toplessness, sucked toes, and Mrs. Parker-Bowles careering along in a narrative that Joanna Trollope is far too ladylike to have dreamed up. The divorce of kings is a moral conundrum for a Church that came into existence because a king insisted on divorce and fell out with the Pope. In the Royal Family, at least since Queen Caroline, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and Edward VIII, in this, separation and divorce have been viewed as dangerously destabilizing. Yet—as if on the principle of not putting beans in your ears—the young generation of the Royal Family has pursued divorce with a veritable passion. The constitutional scholars of the Church of England, along with Charles's and Diana's public-relations advisers and lawyers, are scratching their heads over the question of the couple's divorce and possible remarriage and the consequences for his succession. The Church does not officially sanction wedding ceremonies for people who are divorced (although individual priests can use their discretion about such matters). Additionally, some clerics are concerned about the validity of a coronation oath from a monarch who has very publicly violated his marriage vows. What is certain is that the Church is tangled up with a demystified monarchy. David Hare, when I spoke to him, shook his head. "One enfeebled institution clinging to another," he said.

Some clerics from the Church's Evangelical wing are all for cutting loose from the Crown and going it alone. No doubt their suggestions are heard with tolerance even when they are not followed. The Church has long made a particular virtue of what it calls the middle way. It accepts the most far-ranging beliefs—from Low-Church Evangelical to well-censed Anglo-Catholic—and also some of the fuzziest. What friends call honest doubt, or seeking, enemies call hypocrisy. Many Anglicans, content to rub shoulders with God—with what the theologian Paul Tillich described as "the Ground of Being"—will say and sing words they are light-years from believing. A prelate of the ancient diocese of Durham reassured some and maddened others not long ago by saying that for his part he didn't believe the Virgin Birth should be taken too literally. Hare, in his book, makes the poignant observation that at a meeting of the General Synod, the Church of England's parliament, the clerics couldn't even agree on the wording of the Lord's Prayer. Some of them were whispering alternative versions.

The Church of England looks benignly even on the ninety-seven per cent of the population that chooses to have nothing much to do with it. It cheerfully embraces as part of its flock the large

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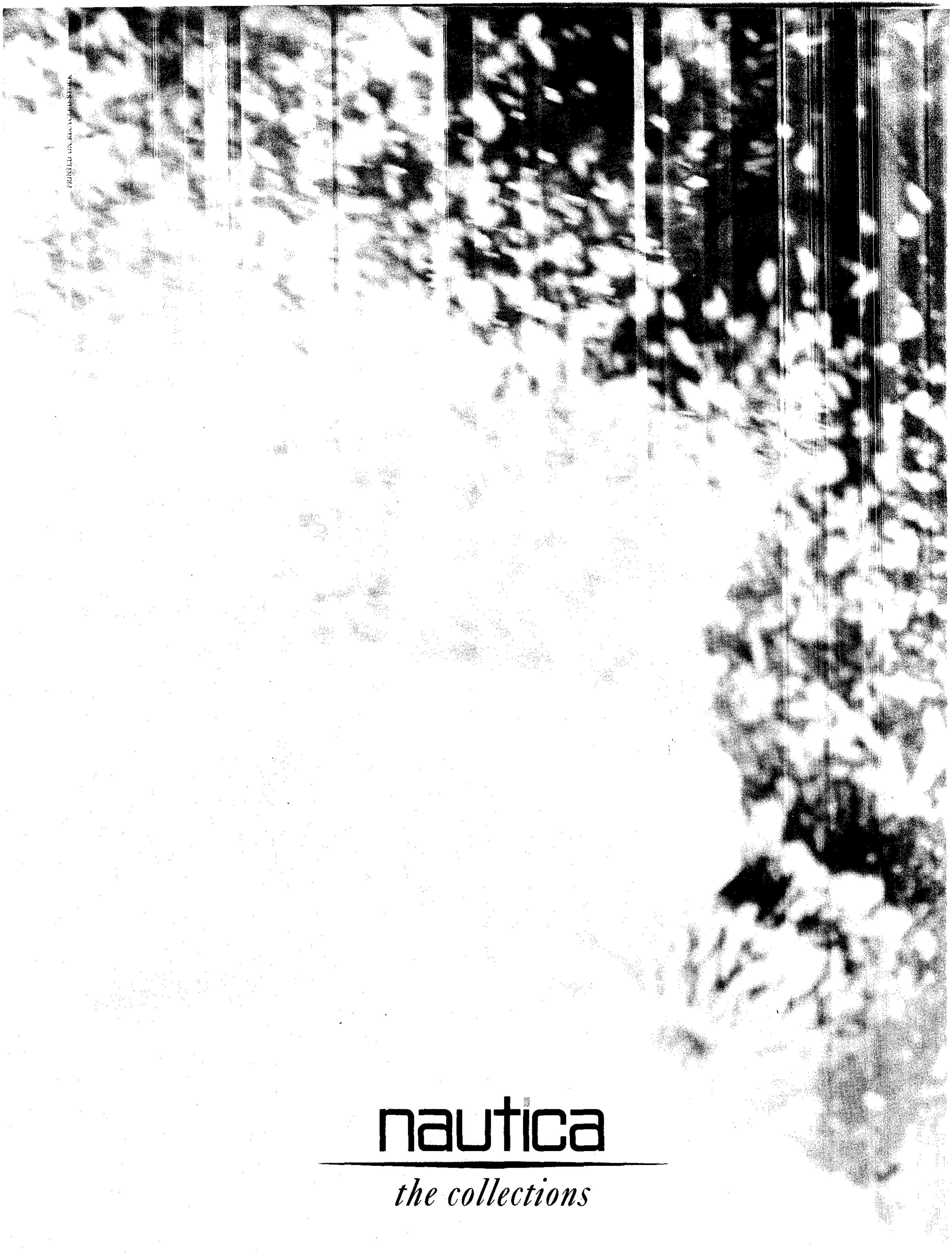
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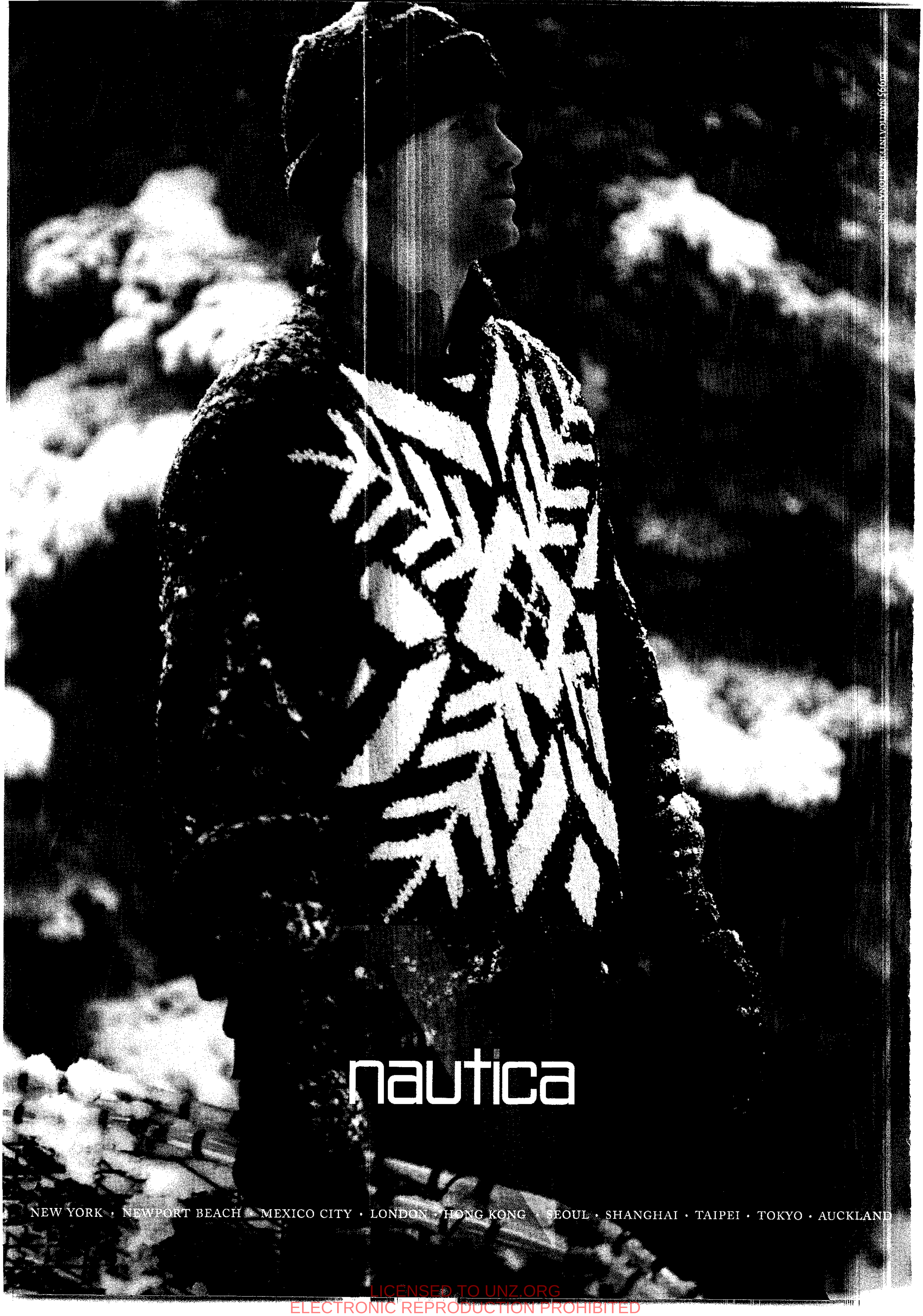
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group of English people who would prefer to wash the car or nurse a hangover on Sabbath mornings but still show up in church for life's great moments: christenings, marriages, and funeral services, jocularly referred to by the clergy as "hatching, matching, and dispatching." There is a vague hope that people will be touched by God in these rites of passage—that the Holy Spirit will tinct the uncomfortable-looking visitors dressed in their best clothes, the way the smell of flowers and musty hymnbooks reaches their nostrils. For many working-class families, especially, infant baptism is thought to be less of a commitment to life in the Church of England than a social ritual—or even the modern version of a good-luck invocation that originated in pagan Britain. These days, too, of course, there is always the hope that some will be attracted to the Ineffable by teletourism.

It is a point of pride that so many old churches are kept in more or less good repair and open for Sunday services, even if the only people present are a handful of elderly women. Churches are less and less likely, however, to be left unlocked on weekdays. It is estimated that an Anglican church is robbed, vandalized, or set on fire every ninety minutes; ecclesiastical-insurance companies have been overwhelmed. Millions of pounds' worth of irreplaceable art and sacred objects—paintings, candlesticks, lecterns, crosses, fonts—have been stolen and sold, often (it is said) to buyers in America.

In spite of everything, the Church of England shows a philosophical acceptance that is positively Buddhist. Clergymen calmly explain that it is a myth that the churches were ever filled: that, apart from a brief span in mid-Victorian social history, when masters went to Matins and servants to Evening Prayer, churches were always at least half empty. Some say that the Church has suffered from the English national habit of not wanting to be seen to try too hard—of making a virtue of failure. One clergyman whom Hare interviewed said that he would not care to see his church become "a majority religion, like in America," because "an oversuccessful church can't represent Christ, who conquers through vulnerability and helplessness." In any case, the only religious buildings in England that seriously rival the vitality of Spence's God-box have been Hindu temples and Muslim mosques. ◆

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THE GENIUS OF DEATH ROW

Why would a murderer awaiting execution bother to obtain a loaded revolver and then decide not to use it? That was the last mystery of Willie Turner, a jailhouse Houdini who had one of the most baffling prison careers in America.

BY PETER J. BOYER

On the evening of May 25th, at about half past nine, a lawyer named Walter Walvick stepped into the hot, buggy night outside a Virginia prison and thought, I need a drink. Walvick had just watched the execution of his client—a forty-nine-year-old black prisoner named Willie Lloyd Turner, whose case he had been arguing in one court or another for seven years. Even that morning, he'd been arguing still, desperately seeking a reprieve from the United States Supreme Court. Now, in his motel room, a few miles away, a bottle of Jack Daniel's awaited him, but first there were reporters and cameras to face, and Turner's possessions to be collected. This last chore was easy enough; Turner's worldly assets consisted of a typewriter—a Smith Corona—and personal items so few that they didn't fill a packing box.

As Walvick drove away from the prison, he considered the typewriter. It had been Turner's prize, the instrument of prolific jailhouse lawyering and also of a lengthy manuscript about his life. In his last days and hours, Turner had cryptically hinted to visitors, and even to prison officials, that he had some surprise in store. "I'm letting them do this to me," Turner had kept saying, and he'd told Walvick to be sure to inspect the typewriter after the execution.

After Walvick arrived at his motel, where he and his wife were joined by two newspaper reporters, he fetched a screwdriver and opened the casing of the instrument. Inside he found, snugly tucked in a cutout hiding slot, a blue steel .32-calibre Smith & Wesson revolver. "Son of a bitch," Walvick said, and he telephoned the local police. The gun, it turned out, was loaded, and the typewriter also concealed a plastic bag filled with bullets. "My goodness, that's unique," the policeman dispatched to the scene remarked. "I'm in awe."

Turner, a death-row memoirist and writer of some ability, had devised an inspired ending for his own rather remarkable story. He had been a prison legend, not just because he cheated the executioner for fifteen years, surviving on Virginia's death row longer than any other condemned killer in the state's recent history; he was a man of extraordinary, if illicit, gifts, whose artful guile had embarrassed and frustrated prison officials throughout Virginia. In 1984, he had helped to plan the largest successful death-row breakout in the history of American penology, then had decided not to escape himself—because, he later asserted, he deemed the plan imperfect and likely to result in bloodshed. Within months, he had plotted another escape (this one involving a helicopter getaway), which was foiled only at the last minute, and earned Turner ever-closer scrutiny. He was moved frequently from prison to prison, yet he managed to breach security wherever he was sent, fashioning handmade keys and weapons with astonishing skill and ease, and stashing them under the noses of the hapless officers charged with his confinement. Turner seemed possessed of a near-magical power to manipulate his strictly confined environment. He also had the charm and personal magnetism to manipulate many of the people within it. Among those fighting for Turner's life in his final months was a prison psychologist who had fallen in love with him and been forced to quit her job.

During his many years on death row, Turner, a small man (five-nine, a hundred and fifty pounds) with a small voice that suggested benignity, received numerous execution dates, heard his death warrant read three times, and once came within five hours of execution in the electric chair; that time, he had chosen his last meal when the United States Supreme Court granted him a reprieve. By this year, when he lost his last court battle, Virginia had adopted lethal injection as an execution option. On the night it was applied to Turner, the silence in the witness room was interrupted when a prison official said, "Damn bastard escaped the electric chair!"—as if Turner had stolen from the event its due spectacle.

And now, along with the gun and the bullets, Turner had left a handwritten note inside the typewriter. It said, simply, "Smile."

The discovery of the gun was humiliating to Virginia's Department of Corrections, and also to Governor George Allen, a conservative, law-and-order Republican, who ordered a full investigation into the matter by the state police. Twenty-one special agents worked on the case for ten weeks this summer, interviewing more than a hundred people, including inmates, visitors, and prison guards. The gun itself was test-fired (it worked) and checked for fingerprints (there were none), but it could not be traced beyond a 1954 transaction in Galax, Virginia, when it—or, at any rate, one like it—was sold to a North Carolinian now dead.

More revealing was the typewriter itself, which was dismantled and examined piece by piece, exposing what amounted to a monument to Turner's stealthy craft. The investigators discovered that the machine contained not only the gun and the bullets and the note but also two saw blades—an escape artist's staple. In the seven years that Turner owned the typewriter, he had rebuilt it into a carrying case for his weapon and his saws. He had cut out a two-by-seven-inch piece of the plastic paper support and then heated it, perhaps with matches, so that he could mold it into a cover for his secret com-

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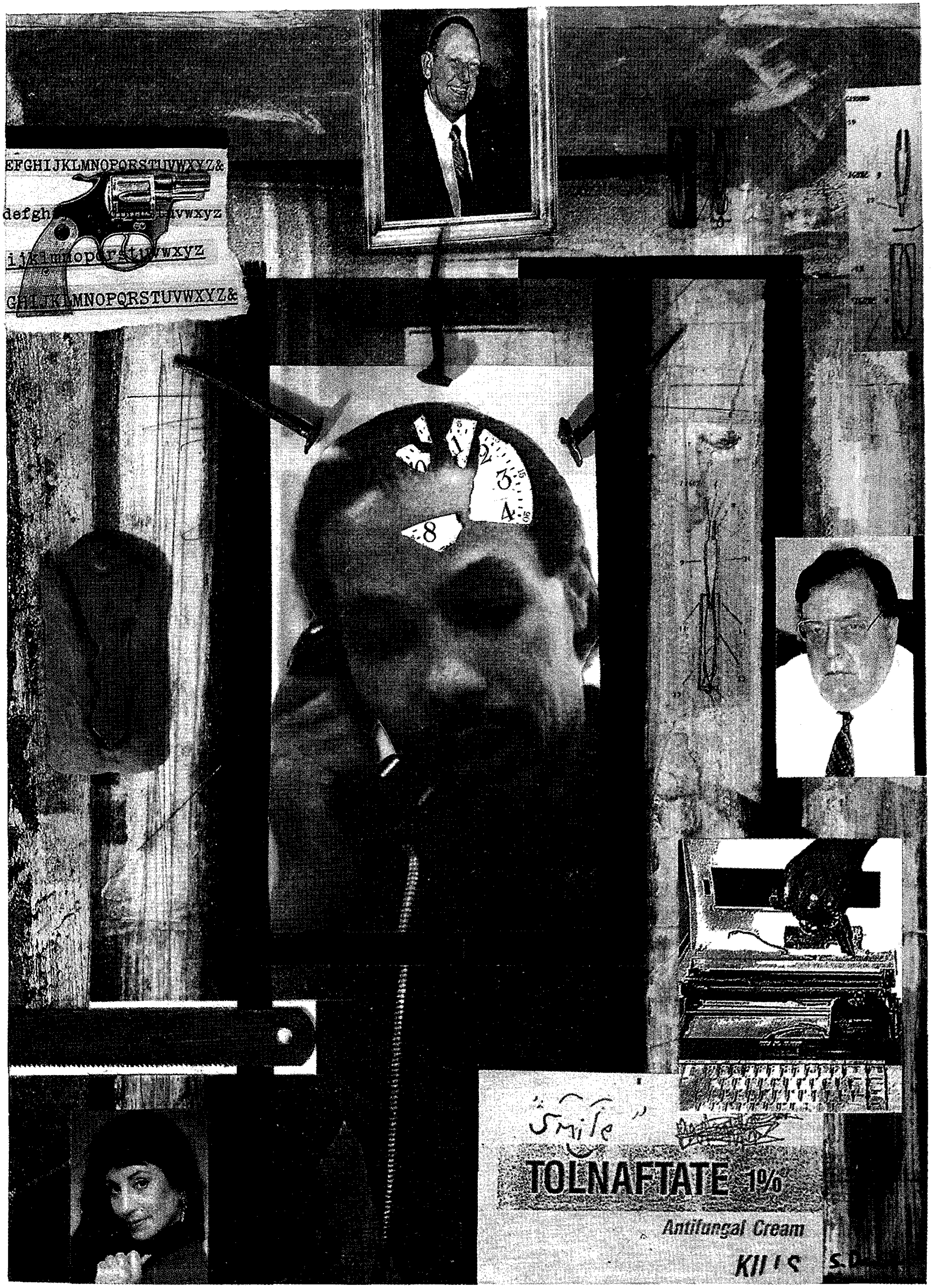
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Willie Turner (center) and Jack Smith (top), his victim; Walter Walvick, who found his gun; and Caroline Schloss, who loved him.

partment, which he had enlarged from a space originally designed for storing the power cord. He somehow made it a perfect fit, exactly matching the curves and dimensions of the storage area. Inside this stash space Turner had cut two one-and-a-half-inch holes, one for the gun barrel, the other for the butt, thereby allowing the cover to fit tightly. Investigators were amazed by the handiwork: Turner had been watched closely, and, in any case, death row was not a place where one could simply ask to borrow a screwdriver. So Turner made do with the materials at hand. The saw blades were found glued to the inside of the typewriter, held by chewing gum and a paste made of non-dairy creamer and water. It was a remarkable feat of engineering as well as of deception, for the typewriter still worked. Turner had produced a four-hundred-and-seventy-three-page manuscript on it.

The investigation published a report in August without determining conclusively how the gun got into the typewriter. The inquiry didn't even try to solve the more compelling mystery Turner left behind. An expert breakout artist, he had once again elected not to escape, although he apparently had a plan and, with his death date nearing, certainly had a motive. Willie Turner had a loaded gun; why didn't he use it?

"WILLIE TURNER could have been anything he wanted to be, with the intellect he had," Billy Smith, who knows something about the subject, has said. Smith, a thirty-five-year-old jeweller from Franklin, Virginia, has spent much of his adult life studying Turner—poring over his records, attending many of his important court dates, and, in the end, witnessing his execution. Smith's obsession began on a July day in 1978, the summer before he went away to college, when he was working as a groundskeeper at the local hospital and saw an ambulance bringing in his father's body. His father, Jack Smith, owned a local jewelry store and had been murdered there during a robbery. The killer, who had been captured in the store, was Turner.

For the next seventeen years, Willie Turner dominated Billy Smith's psychic landscape. Once, when he was home from college, the phone rang late at night, and Billy's mother answered. The local sheriff was calling to tell the Smiths that Turner had escaped from jail—just miles from the Smiths' home—and was still at large. He's coming to my house, Billy thought. "I slept in front of my mom's bedroom, on a couch, with a shotgun in my hand," he recalls. "They called at four, five o'clock in the morning, saying he had been captured. But you don't realize the terror."

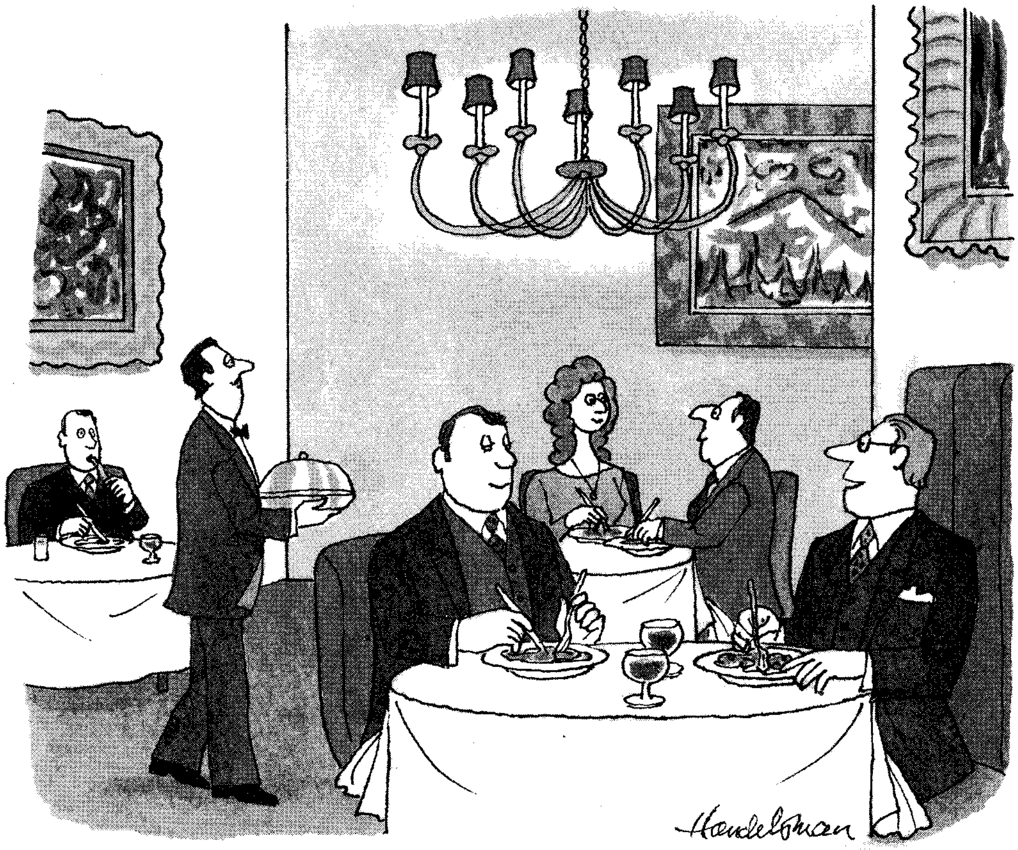
After graduation, Smith felt obliged to return to Franklin to run the jewelry store, abandoning plans to see something of the world. He married and started a family, but he dreamed of standing over Turner when he was strapped into the electric chair and looking him in the eye as the switch was pulled. "I wanted my face to be the last face he saw," Smith said. Turner had been sentenced to death for killing Smith's father, but there were appeals, and every execution date was stayed. After one of Turner's trials, Smith heard that a juror had said he voted for the death penalty because he couldn't otherwise return from the jury room and face the victim's family. Thereafter, Smith attended every court session he could get to, sitting in the front row. As the process dragged on, he occasionally went to the attic and hauled out a huge box filled with documents about the case. "Every time I thought that I might be softening up, I'd sit down and pull it out and read it," he says. "My wife would say, 'Billy, when is this going to end?' And I'd tell her, 'I've got to read this. I've got to do it.' Because, sure, it brings everything back, but it reminds you of what the man did, and what he was." He harbors no doubt about Turner's essential nature—"He is a vicious killer"—yet, over the years, he has at times admitted to a grudging respect for him. "I'll be the first one to say the man was brilliant," Smith said recently. "A genius." He cannot understand how a man could make such a waste of his talent and of his life.

"I WAS born into a world of sho 'nuff hard times back in December 9, 1945," the opening line of Turner's manuscript reads, and in all its many pages these are his truest words. But they do not convey the despair of Turner's hard times, which are reflected in court records documenting his criminal history. Turner's father, Elbert, was a one-eyed drunk of such low standing that his neighbors around Franklin had only contempt for him. He was considered unreliable and shiftless, and also mean. He did day work on some of the farms around Franklin, staying on the job long enough to pay for whiskey; no time of day was too early for him to start drinking. He put his sons in the fields and then spent their pay on liquor. His wife, Gussie, was sickly, and passed most of her time in bed. She drank, too, and her children—four boys and their sister—were mostly left to take care of themselves. There was much violence in the household. Elbert had an outsized temper, and Gussie, too, could dole out cruelty. Willie's sister, Esmon, later recalled a time when Willie had snitched to their father about one of Gussie's liaisons with another man: Gussie choked the boy until he passed out. (The old man, for his part, promised him a beating whenever Willie kept anything from him.)

The Turners lived in a succession of tin-roofed tarpaper shacks, one-room affairs with blankets strung across them to create bedrooms. The boys slept together in one iron bed, but not well; their bedding crawled with vermin. Sometimes they burned sulfur to chase the bugs—a remedy that burned the lungs and achieved uneven success. The children rarely had shoes, which meant they almost always had worms, especially in the summer. "We knew we had them because we would have stomach cramps, nausea, and diarrhea," Willie's brother James said in an affidavit for one of Willie's trials. "We got them from going barefoot and eating pork parts that made us sick. I don't remember how we treated them. I think turpentine and sugar was the common remedy." For food, there were beans and, occasionally, vegetables from a garden, but there was never enough. Willie later remembered special times, such as Christmas, as an occasion for Campbell's chicken-noodle soup, and on one of his execution dates when the hour came for him to request his last meal that is what he asked for.

The children were enrolled in school, but they attended only occasionally, being kept out for long stretches each year to work in the fields. Willie was fifteen and was still in the fourth grade when he dropped out, unable to read or write.

Later in his life, Willie's sympathizers would point to this wretched background



"I'm rather fortunate. I have no parents, so Medicare is no problem, and I have no children, so the environment is no problem."

as a case study in root-cause sociology. How could such a background produce anything but an anti-social personality? But even the cruellest childhood doesn't always dictate a life of crime. Willie's three brothers all spent time in prison as well, and one died, but the two surviving brothers ultimately salvaged their lives, finding work and raising families. Esmon, the sister, became a psychiatric nurse near Norfolk. Among the children, Willie had been the cleverest, but he had also been the one most deeply affected by his beginnings. Esmon later recalled that as a boy Willie fell into fits of some sort, and would just drift from contact; he himself once told a state-appointed psychiatrist of experiencing mysterious spells during which, he said, "it seems like I get evil."

By the time Willie reached his teens, it was plain that his ruling characteristics were personal charm and an irresistible criminal impulse, which when he turned seventeen provided a glimpse of his destiny: a life behind bars. His good looks and slick talk—he had a gift for seeming sincere—won favor with the girls, but his allure was complex; he commanded an intense devotion from his girlfriends, sometimes much younger than he. His sister later tried to describe their feeling for him to a psychiatrist studying Willie's case. In one instance, she recalled, he had his girlfriend "believing that he was God and she was believing that he could do anything he wanted to and could make anything happen." The reality was that Willie, being illiterate, black, and poor, could not make much of anything happen. He got a job washing dishes at a local restaurant, but his record shows that he broke into the place one night and robbed it. That and a charge of contributing to the delinquency of a minor, resulting from the pregnancy of a fourteen-year-old girl, landed him in jail at the age of seventeen.

The experience terrified him, and always would. Throughout Turner's criminal life, his arrival at every new jail, every new prison, stirred some version of the response he felt on his first day at the Nansemond County Jail, in 1963. "I was locked in a cell with about seventeen other prisoners," he wrote in his memoir. "They were all great big mean looking adults. Some were waiting to be tried for rape, murder and robbery. And some had already been sentenced from fifty years to life for this and that. I was the smallest and youngest prisoner in there, and I didn't know anybody. It was the most horrifying situation that I have ever been in." And Turner's reaction to that fear would always be the same: violence and escape. When one of his "mean looking" cellmates approached him that first day, Willie jumped him and beat him with a wooden hairbrush he had wrapped in a towel. "He fell to the floor," he recalled in his memoirs. "I couldn't stop hitting and kicking him. He was calling for some of his buddies to come get me off of him, but they did nothing. They stood around laughing until the jailer came and I was stopped."

Willie was transferred to a reform school (brimful of "super tough looking" boys); on the third day, he ran away. He'd learned to pick a lock, a skill that enabled him to snatch his street clothes and stuff them into plastic bags, which he used for flotation as he crossed the swampy Pamunkey River outside the grounds of the school. Turner spent his first night in the woods, sleeping in a tree. He was caught and returned to reform school, but his course was set. His rap sheet for the next few years was a roster of small-time crimes—public drunkenness and disorderly conduct, petit larceny, vagrancy—that led inevitably to the big-league stuff. Willie's own version of this period of his life is a con artist's dodge, in which Fortune is the only culprit:

> By the time I was in my early twenties, I had experienced so much bad luck I couldn't help but think that good luck had to be right around the corner for me, though it was not. My luck continued to be so bad that all one had to do to find the same would be to simply step in my shoes for only a fraction of a second. Still, I kept on hoping and trying for the better. It seems like, whether you are in the right or wrong, once you start falling you just can't stop without an awful lot of help.

In fact, court records show that Willie made his own luck. In 1966, when he was

"I wish we had tiptoed, not jumped, into wicker."

• •

twenty, he got drunk and shot a man in a fight outside a restaurant, and shortly after that he was charged with assaulting a girlfriend and threatening her with a gun. That was followed by a period on the lam, which ended in a drunken shooting outside a bar in Franklin. Willie, who felt he had been disrespected by an old pal named Lorenzo Wallace Artis, shot him five times, wounding him in the head, stomach, and chest. "I hope he dies," Willie told the arresting officer as he was taken away. Artis lived, but Willie was bound for the state prison.

WILLIE'S first impression of the Virginia State Penitentiary, in Richmond, was his customary one—"the biggest, ugliest and meanest looking prison I had ever seen"—and his trepidation was not without basis. Prison was a world in which the acculturation process was brutally simple: there were victims and victimizers, and everybody had to choose. Willie, who was small and pretty, became a target, and he responded characteristically. He hated the homosexual predators in the population, and determined to be made into no one's "punk." When, after three weeks in the pen, he received a "gift" of two cartons of cigarettes and some candy, he traded the smokes for a lead pipe; then, when his benefactor approached him, Willie jumped, savagely beating the inmate until some other prisoners broke it up.

Turner's prison records reveal his early years of incarceration to be an almost uninterrupted expression of violent impulses. He was transferred to a road gang, where he answered a perceived insult by attacking a fellow crew member with a bush axe, hitting him in the face. Fearing reprisal, he eventually escaped from the camp with the help of a girlfriend; she drove the getaway car. They went to Washington, D.C., where they ran street scams for a few months. It may have been the closest he would ever come to finding a place for himself in the world outside prison. Here is Turner's description of one scam:

> The game was played by marking a twenty with a special note, such as "Happy Birthday, Dad," on it. We would then go from store to store, or any place where money is exchanged such as bars, night clubs and theaters. In each place one of us would use it to buy a dollar or so worth of items, get our change, leave and then return a few minutes later together looking all around on the floor just fussing and accusing each other of having lost the special twenty dollar bill. We looked rich and stupid as we were searching through a hand full of money for it. The act starts on the street and continues all the way back to the cashier that we gave the twenty to.
>
> At that point, if we have not already been asked what we are looking for, I would walk up to the cashier and say, "Hey, Miss, or Mister, I may have given you the wrong twenty a few minutes ago when I paid for this (showing whatever item was bought). I looked everywhere and can't find it. It had "Happy Birthday, Dad" written on it. Would you please look and see if I gave it to you?"
>
> Once the bill is found, my partner and I show a sign of a great big relief because it means so much to us. Then one of us pulls out another twenty dollar bill while asking the cashier, "Will you please give that one back to me and charge me for this item with this one. Ninety-nine per cent of the time we would be given back the first twenty and about eighteen dollars in change from the second one.
>
> It is the way you word it, along with the rest of the act, while you are reaching for one bill and handing one back at the same time that causes the confusion of otherwise simple arithmetic.

Eventually, Willie was recaptured and sent to the Powhatan maximum-security facility, near Richmond ("the roughest prison in the state," he called it), where his adjustment to prison life resumed. A fight landed him in the segregation unit, reserved for incorrigibles, and before very long he stabbed another prisoner during a card game. His personal prison wars peaked in 1973, in an altercation with an inmate named Romero Riddick, who made the mistake of carrying a shiv when he came to collect a debt. Willie was waiting with a glass of salted orange juice, which he tossed in Riddick's face; there was a fight, with much blood, and in the end Riddick was dead.

Turner later wrote that the experience filled him with regret, and it may well have done so. His first killing at last secured his reputation. In any case, the assaults stopped, and a sort of transformation occurred after he was transferred to the Virginia State Penitentiary. He was convicted of second-degree murder for Riddick's death, and did time in isolation, but when he returned to the general prison population he stayed clear of trouble. He went to work in the prison kitchen, and studied hard to learn to read and write. In the outside world, his illiteracy had always been an enormous handicap (it had kept him out of the Army, for one thing) and the source of his deepest shame. In his manuscript, there is a story of a bittersweet time from his youth, before he had got into trouble, when he was jarringly confronted by his own limitations:

> Finally, I ended up living with my aunt in North Carolina and working for her. I was doing pretty good there and had found me a nice little girlfriend until Valentine's Day rolled around. I bought her the biggest and prettiest red heart I could find. And I got my aunt to address the envelope to my girlfriend for me. I wouldn't let my aunt see the card because I knew she would complain that I paid too much for it. And I just couldn't wait to see the reward of a great big smile of approval by my girlfriend for the card, as I had imagined I would, when I went to see her on Valentine's Day, as planned. I got no such smile. Instead, I found her out in her front yard crying while the rest of the folks were rolling all around on the ground laughing and pointing at me. I had no idea what was going on and thought maybe it was just some sort of a friendly joke or something.
>
> When I asked her if she had gotten the card I sent her and what was the matter, she threw her arms around me and cried out, 'They said you can't read.' I changed colors from a combination of guilt and shame. I tried to deny it. But before I could get anywhere, she pointed out to me that I had sent her a Father's Day card for Valentine's Day. I had never felt so hurt in all the days of my life. In fact, I felt so cheap you could have bought me all day long two for a penny. All I could do was walk away.

Once he had learned to read and write, Turner became something of a prison bookworm, and he even taught other prisoners to read. He enrolled in the prison's vocational school and took barbering courses, and his prison report praised his "personal growth" and "exceptional work in the barbering field." Turner actually seemed to flourish in this new undertaking, and earned the prized job of prison barber. In 1975, a week before his thirtieth birthday, he was awarded his barber's certificate. "It was a real big deal for me and I took every bit of it seriously," he wrote. "Because it was as close as I had ever been to being a legally licensed member of any profession." He was trusted with the potentially lethal tools of his new trade, and was even allowed to cut hair in the edgy segregation unit in which he had been so often confined. Turner's prison record includes a commendation for the "outstanding work he is doing toward his own rehabilitation."

Then he was paroled.

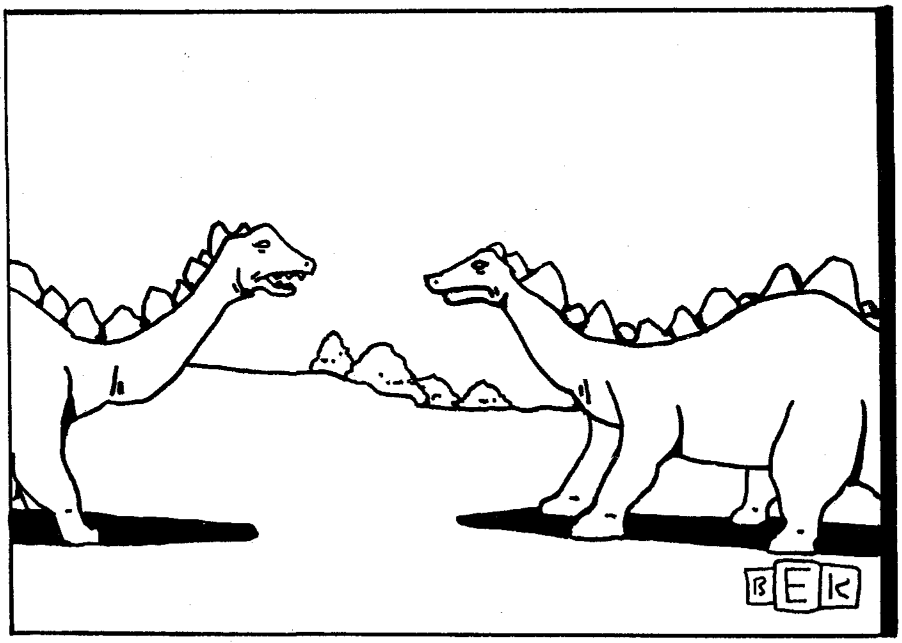
"I WAS wearing a twenty-four-hour-a-day smile of approval spread across my face from ear to ear," Turner wrote, describing his mood when he returned to Franklin early in 1978. But although he had achieved respect and a certain standing in prison, he was nothing in the outside world. In Franklin, he worked briefly as a barber, but mostly he drank and chased women. One afternoon, bumming around with a friend, he tried to pick up a white girl at the local Dairy Queen. The girl, who had just finished high school at the time, remembered the incident years later, not least for its audacity; after all, Tidewater Virginia was Nat Turner country, and Saturday-afternoon Klan rallies lived in near memory. Willie, as smooth as ever, planted a kiss on the girl's hand and got her phone number as well, and she secretly hoped he would call. He never did. Freedom was proving a more difficult adjustment than prison, and Willie signalled the direction he meant to take when, after arriving home, he acquired a sawed-off shotgun.

His father had died years before, and Willie wasn't getting on with his mother, who was now living in a housing project in Franklin. She worried that Willie would hurt somebody with the shotgun, and on one occasion she called the police when he threatened her. James Peebles, an uncle of Willie's, had helped one of Willie's brothers turn his life around, but he couldn't reach Willie. Peebles told a policeman, "Willie needs help," but the officer said there was nothing he could do. "I love my nephew," Peebles says now, remembering that time, "but he just couldn't deal with society."

Willie had talked of opening his own barbershop in town, and had even decided on a name and designed a business card ("Doc's Hair Clinic: If You Want Your Hair to Be Coming to You . . . You Should Be Coming Here"). But on the morning of July 12, 1978, he wrapped his shotgun in a green towel, put it in a brown paper bag, and took a walk downtown, stopping at Smith Jewelers.

In his memoir Turner invariably portrays his crimes as mishaps rather than misdeeds, and for the central crime of his life he created a multilayered confection. His version of what happened at Smith Jewelers was that he had set out to get rid of the shotgun, which he no longer wanted, and had ducked into Smith's only to avoid a cop who was trailing him. Before he knew it, the policeman had entered the place, and Willie, fearing a shootout, had relieved the officer of his service revolver. But his fingers had been slick with sweat and gun oil, and the revolver had accidentally fired. A struggle had followed, and, fearing that the policeman would shoot him, he had emptied the gun before ordering an ambulance for Smith and peacefully surrendering. Turner's version, suffice it to say, is at variance with the sworn testimony and statements of eyewitnesses to the event.

According to the eyewitnesses, Turner entered Smith Jewelers at about eleven-thirty, carrying his shotgun. As Mary Huffman, who had worked for Mr. Smith for seven years, was helping a cus-



"Under 'Occupation' I usually just put 'Roam the earth.' "

tomer, Shelton Smith (no relation), with a watchband, she noticed Willie and his green velour package. He removed the towel, revealing a twelve-gauge shotgun with the barrel cut down to nine inches, and laid the gun on the counter. Jack Smith, noticing it, asked Willie, "What can I do for you?" Having been robbed before, Smith knew that the thing to do was to stay calm and to give the intruder whatever he was after.

Willie, saying nothing, picked up the gun and motioned with it, whereupon Jack Smith began loading money and jewelry into bags while tripping the store's silent alarm. When another customer, Judith R. Cosby, entered the store, Willie, still silent, motioned to everyone to line up behind the counter, and he kicked Mrs. Cosby and Shelton Smith in the buttocks when they didn't move quickly enough. A moment later, a Franklin police officer named Alan Bain walked in the front door and told Jack Smith that his alarm was ringing; the officer's customized .38 Special, with its outsized trigger and grip, was still strapped in its holster. Willie took it and lined him up with the others. He toyed with the policeman's gun, firing a shot into the back of the store. Then, perhaps spooked by a siren sounding outside, Willie aimed the .38 at Jack Smith and fired, grazing his head. "I heard Mr. Smith yell like a puppy and he fell to the floor," Mary Huffman testified. She and Shelton Smith managed to flee through the front door while Officer Bain was offering to drive Turner out of town, or anywhere he wanted to go, so long as he didn't shoot anyone else. Willie assured the policeman that he wouldn't hurt him, "but I'm going to kill this . . . squealer!" He then leaned over the counter and fired a bullet into Jack Smith's chest. Mrs. Cosby, feeling queasy, asked Turner's permission to sit down. He told her to go ahead. Smith made a gurgling sound, and Willie fired another bullet into him. Shot through the lung and heart, Smith made no more sound. In the commotion, Officer Bain jumped Willie and managed to seize the two guns. He ordered Willie onto the floor, pointed his revolver at him, and called for support. "Well," Turner said as the police handcuffed him, "I guess I'm on the way back."

TURNER spent more than a year in the Southampton County Jail awaiting the outcome of his trial—plenty of time

ROYAL AFFAIRS

DIANA MADE EASY

"A" is for Adultery. Charles confessed last year to an affair with Camilla Parker-Bowles, a huntress; now Diana has admitted to sleeping with Captain James Hewitt, a cad.

"B" is for Bulimia. Diana says that she used to gorge herself and throw up every day—a technique perfected by the tabloid press. At one point, she upgrades it to "rampant bulimia."

"C" is for Charles: otherwise known as "my husband." Non-rampant.

"D" is for Divorce. What Diana does not want, for the sake of her children. This may cause seating problems at any forthcoming coronation.

"E" is for Enemy, The. Diana refers to "the enemy" and to mysterious "people" who intercept her mail. Also known as "my husband's department."

"F" is for Farm, The Funny. Where most of the Royal Family now think Diana should be sent.

"G" is for George III, The Madness of. The drawback to "F."

"H" is for Hearts, Queen of People's. What Diana sees herself as. Not to be confused with Queen of England.

"I" is for Inside. Where the pain is.

"J" is for James Gilbey. An admirer of the Princess. Named her Squidgy, nevertheless.

"K" is for King. Diana hinted that the crown might pass not to her husband but to her son William. For military solution, see "P."

"L" is for Love. "Someone's got to go out there and love people," Diana says. What people?

"M" is for Mailer, Norman. "She won't go quietly, that's the problem," the Princess says, referring to herself in the third person. Pure Mailer.

"N" is for *News of the World*. A Sunday tabloid newspaper whose banner headline, on the day before the interview, read "DI FOUND KNICKERS IN CHARLES' POCKET." Regrettably, the interviewer forgot to request confirmation of this discovery from the Princess.

"O" is for O. J. Simpson. Claims the knickers were planted.

"P" is for Powell, General Colin. Probably the only guy who could sort out this mess. Yet to be persuaded.

"Q" is for Queen, the sort of rock band that the Princess used to admire when she was Lady Diana Spencer.

"R" is for Rejects. "I found myself more and more involved with people who were rejected by society, and I found an affinity there," Diana says. Hey, leave the in-laws out of this.

"S" is for Soames, The Rt. Hon. Nicholas. Also known as Fatty. Minister for the Armed Forces. Turned big guns on Diana after the interview, airing his suspicions that she was "in the advanced stages of paranoia." Close friend of the Prince of Wales.

"T" is for Three. "Well, there were three of us in this marriage, so it was a bit crowded," Diana says. Not as sexy as it sounds. Still, a great line.

"U" is for Unstable. "There is no better way to dismantle a personality than to isolate it," the Princess says. It is subsequently reported that she is quoting by heart from the memoir of a former Beirut hostage. Yikes.

"V" is for Verbal Skill. Alarmingly improved upon previous appearances, suggesting extensive rehearsal.

"W" is for Walters, Barbara. The only person likely to have grasped everything that Diana was talking about—strength through weakness, light through tunnels, "real" people.

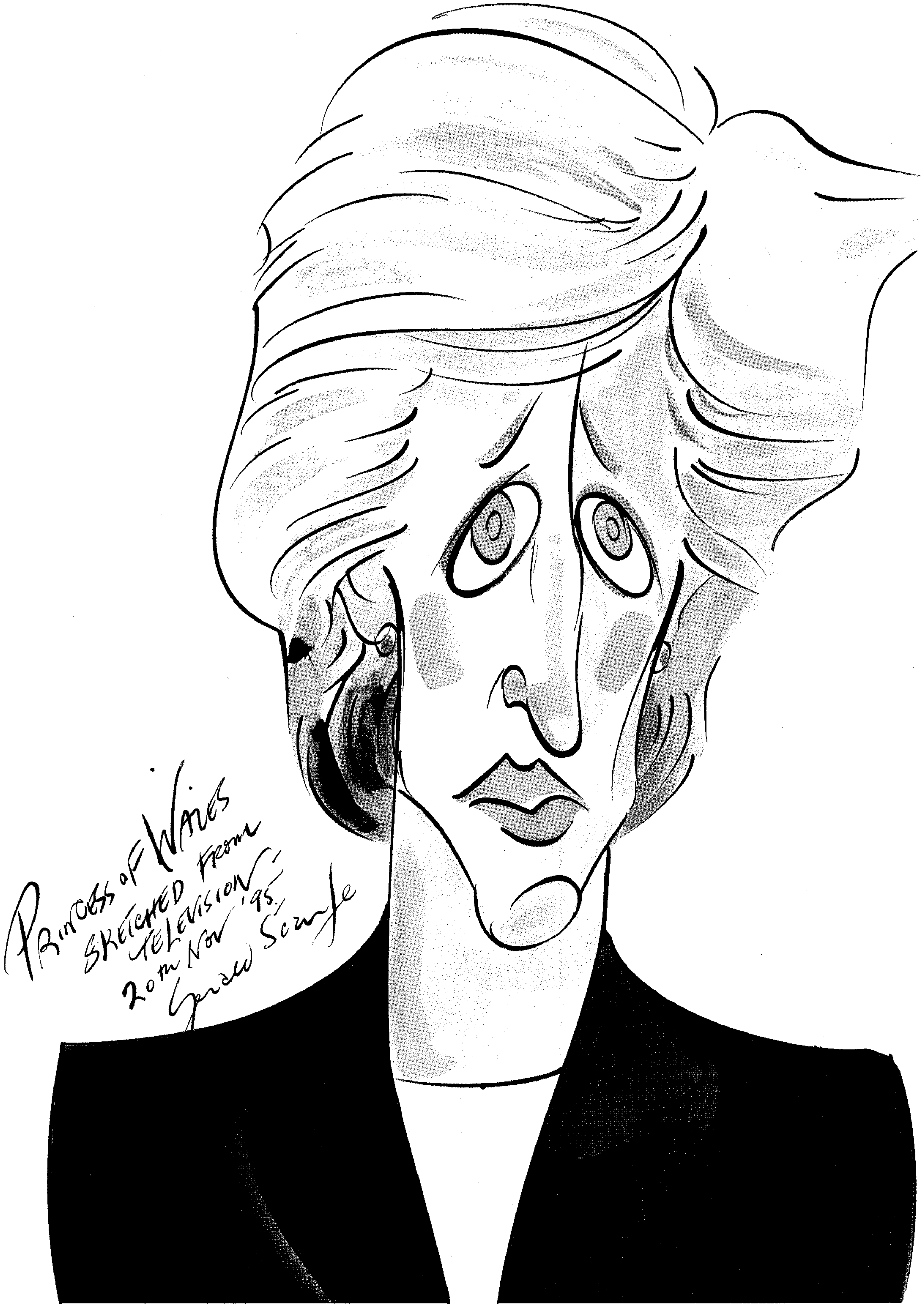
"X" is for "X-Files, The." Shown in England on a BBC channel immediately before broadcast of interview. An hour of dark fantasy about bizarre, illogical forces that could threaten Western civilization, followed by something *really* scary.

"Y" is for Young Boy. Diana, asked whether she made obsessive phone calls to a Mr. Oliver Hoare, a married art dealer, admits to making a few, but claims that "a young boy had done most of them." What boy?

"Z" is for Zapruder, Abraham. Man with camera. Shot Super-8 footage of young boy putting knickers in pocket. Proved young boy was acting alone.

—ANTHONY LANE

GERALD SCARFE



Princess of Wales
Sketched from
television –
20th Nov '95.
Gerald Scarfe

for him to create an escape plan. The chief problem to be overcome, Turner learned, was that the bars to the cellblock were constructed of a metal resistant to hacksaw blades, so he knew he would have to open the huge door somehow rather than try to cut through it. For days, his memoir recounts, he listened carefully every time the door was opened and closed, and managed to figure out the gearing in its locking mechanism and to draw a mind's-eye picture of how it worked. All he needed now was a saw blade to cut into the lock box so that he could rework the mechanism, allowing him to open the door from inside the cellblock. This was his hometown jail, and Turner knew it well, including the location of the storage area containing tools. The storage space was locked, of course, but he persuaded a jail trusty to slip a thin piece of plastic into its lock, thereby making an impression that allowed Turner to make a pick that would open it. The pick worked, and Willie had his blades. He then cut two bars at the bottom corner of his cell, which were of ordinary steel, in such a way that he could slip into the block at will. Each night, as the other prisoners slept, he left his cell and worked on the lock box, covering his progress at the end of each session with a paste made of gum and ink. He finally cut through the metal plate and rigged the lock mechanism so that he could leave the cellblock to work on the next phase of his plan, which was cutting the bars on one of the windows of the jailhouse itself. Again, he covered his work each night with his homemade paste.

Finally, on a snowy evening just days before the judge was to impose sentence, Turner made his move. He tucked a dummy into his bed, went through the cellblock door, removed the bars to the window, and slipped out of the jail. He hitched a ride to Franklin and walked right through town to a friend's house; there he caught a ride to his great-aunt's home, across the North Carolina line. His jailers, falling for the ancient dummy gag, didn't discover his escape for hours. However, his aunt's home, where he had often stayed when he was a boy, was one of the first places they thought they might find him, and they called the North Carolina police. At 3 A.M., Turner, asleep on his aunt's couch, was recaptured by them without incident. He was tried and convicted for the escape, and was sentenced to death for the murder of Jack Smith.

THE DESOLATE BEAUTY PARLOR ON BEACH AVENUE

So much has impaired here
as well as getting here. It's where
we used to trade personals, then divide up
the aptly named "spoils." You know the kind of crud
I mean. Zombie set-tos,
the kind of thing.

It was impossible to locate Hell or Heaven
standing in the basement, inspecting
which pipes might have led to upstairs.
And the little pines off the street—
so sweet, but no sweeter
than what's been taken down in the interim.
I wonder where people hang their laundry nowadays,
who's for sale.

Then I saw it over Cannibal Beach—a big baboon of a moon wafting this way
and that across the silken heather. It gave me
the widdershins. I'm still counting.
But the nice octagon trainer—*he* offered something
in the way of comfort, that eyeglasses can choose to go
and fit if they're so inclined. I'm talking
product now, and the new productivity
that comes from it. No one can afford
to ignore it anymore. Sure, sheep
bawl at their station, mad at having voted,
at being voided. But another way of sexy being
has been unveiled, and disturbed. I almost think
they won't be able to fix it, but it's so new—

Wait for the end, though. It's a small, arched close
built to contain ragged passions, and emptied
of them at present. The dale sweeps down
the sober dawn. Every face shows signs
of extreme concentration. Now *that's*
the way I'd like to behold you. For always.
For when the clipper blows astray and the
cheap shot is parted.

—John Ashbery

Virginia's death row is housed in the Mecklenburg Correctional Center, a modern brick complex surrounded by hurricane fences, each of which is topped with billows of curled razor wire. The thought of the place filled Turner with the old dread, summoning visions of confrontations with "cold killers willing to kill or try to kill anybody in sight for no good reason." Instead, he was greeted by a death-row welcoming committee. Turner had been preceded at Mecklenburg by his reputation, and the inmates were impressed; his jailhouse escape commanded respect.

In the world of prison, death row is a separate country. People there share a time reference that is unique: a calendar that disobeys the rules of nature. Each of them is given the date of his death. "Dead men walking" is how the guards refer to them. Prison administrators know that it is, strangely, a relatively well ordered place, much less tumultuous and violent than other areas of a prison. When Turner arrived, in February of 1980, there were seven other prisoners on the row, and Turner not only fitted right in but almost immediately assumed a position of leadership. Within that insular culture, inmates respected by guards and their fellow-prisoners were accorded a certain authority and responsibility: they recommended time schedules and, sub rosa, they maintained discipline within their group. Turner, according to people who knew him there, resumed the disciplined life he had achieved in prison before the interruption of parole. Because death row is the one place in prison where there is no reason for rehabilitation, it offers no classes or official jobs, but Turner set a rigorous schedule for himself, which was guided by a determined work ethic. He exercised in his cell for two hours every day (running in place holding quart Pepsi bottles filled with water), and took part in various projects, including a lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union seeking better conditions for the inmates. “Willie had not been there very long, and he was suggested by the other prisoners as someone that we should talk to,” says Jan Elvin, a paralegal who worked on the A.C.L.U.’s case. “And this is one of the things that I noticed about him the most, at first: how self-disciplined he was, and how well respected that self-discipline made him among other prisoners and among the guards. He had this amazing workout routine every day, and, in terms of what he would eat, he was very careful about taking care of himself. He just had his own personal set of standards.”

Turner also set aside time each day to work on an invention, a barbering device he called De-Ending Shears, which he claimed would facilitate the removal of split ends. When he had perfected the concept, he wrote to the United States Patent and Trademark Office, and was informed that the granting of a patent required detailed drawings and descriptions of any new device. He read art books, so that he could learn all about shading and perspective for his drawing, and undertook the preparation of his application. The prison did not allow inmates to have rulers, but Turner made do with a hacksaw blade, which he also used to fashion a piece of plastic into a drawing compass.

Turner ultimately got his patent—U.S. Patent No. 4,428,119—for the De-Ending Shears. It was the first token of legitimate respect he had ever received. “I was some kinda proud of myself,” he wrote, “for having finally realized my dream to be an inventor despite the repeated discouraging words (such as: Boy, you are crazy going around here talking about being some kinda inventor. Boy, ain’t no nigger gonna invent nothing) from my parents and others as I grew up picking cotton and doing other farm labor work. That achievement alone meant more to me than any amount of potential personal financial gain from it did.”

There was respect, too, for the other work that Turner undertook, his true work, which he called his “unauthorized projects”—making weapons, finding hiding places, and conceiving a plan for escape.

Almost from the moment Turner arrived at Mecklenburg, he began thinking of a way out. There would have to be weapons, of course, which meant there had to be hiding places in which to stash them. He carved openings into hollow places in his cell—a table leg, the window frame, the wall—and concealed his handiwork with his mixture of homemade dyes and pastes. He quickly had plenty of stash space for knives, his tools, and other prisoners’ dope. Within days of his arrival, he recalled in his memoir, he was presented with an especially tricky challenge. One of his new friends on the row, a former cop named Frank Coppola, who had been convicted of a brutal murder, called Turner aside one day and showed him a .45-calibre handgun and some bullets he’d had smuggled in. A gun was the most highly prized of all contraband, and Turner quickly agreed to find a good hiding place for it (thereby guaranteeing access to the gun for himself). Using a picklock he’d made, Turner opened a plumbing closet between two cells and attached the gun to a wire (taken from a broom) that was attached to an air vent in the cell above—Coppola’s cell. The gun hung suspended in the air duct.

Knives, of the handcrafted variety, are a common item in any prison, but Turner had high standards, and his main knife was a heavy-duty instrument made from a piece of his cell door (he camouflaged the missing door part with his paste-and-ink mixture). Communications and freedom of movement are essential to any complex undertaking, and Turner devised ways to talk to his fellow-inmates through the ventilation system, through the plumbing, and, in emergencies only, through handwritten notes attached to the end of a rope he kept hidden in his cell. He also made keys; in fact, jailhouse locksmithing was probably his greatest talent. At Powhatan, for example, he removed strips of stainless steel from the toilet in his cell and carved them into keys: he used a mental pattern, formed by memorizing the shape of the key, its ridges and dips, which he saw when guards locked and unlocked the prison doors. The stainless steel from the toilet was perfect for keys—soft enough to shape but firm enough to turn the lock. To enter and leave his own cell, Turner claimed, he hot-wired the motor that op-

“Do you realize that that was the first time neither of us was married?”

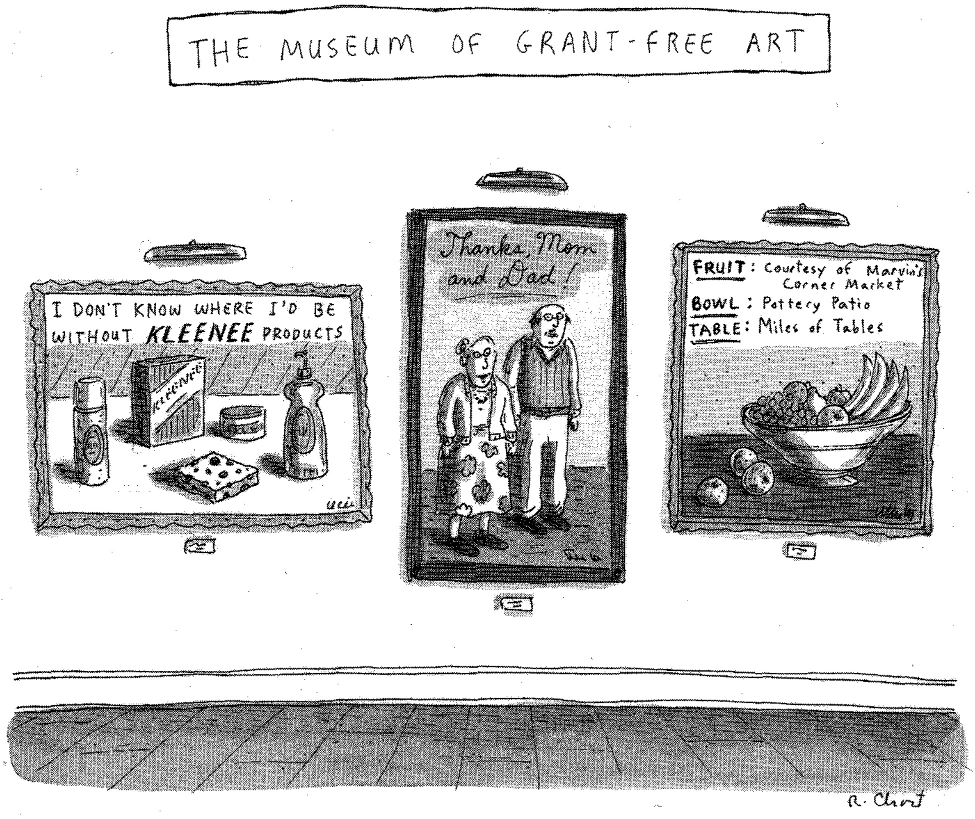
erated his door electronically from the guards' control booth.

Respect was everything to Turner, and he took pride in his covert craftsmanship, regarding himself, he wrote, "as a man of principles and patience. And I am confident in my ability to get the job done safely." He came to be deemed the first citizen of death row, and his status conveyed power: he had the weapons and the dope. It also put him in a position to help lead an unthinkable escape plot.

THE men on Mecklenburg's death row were, it turned out, something of a literary group, and at least three of them, including Turner, wrote an account of the 1984 breakout. Their variance in describing the roles of key players in the famous escape proves that nonfiction is a relative term in prison literature. Turner's memoir, written six years after the event, portrays himself as the mastermind of the escape, and although the manuscript is patently the self-serving work of a con man, his record and reputation are genuine enough, lending his account credence. At least one current Mecklenburg official, who regarded Turner as "a sorry son of a bitch," also allows that he was considered "the mastermind."

Willie figured that any successful escape from Mecklenburg would require the participation of several inmates, and they would automatically add to the risk. There were not only snitches to worry about but men with loose tongues, whose bragging—or "dry snitching," as it's called—could also sink a plan. The death-row population had grown to a dozen men—a group too large to escape together, too small to make it possible to completely exclude a few without raising suspicion and resentment. So Turner and Coppola, who were directing the scheme, held "dummy" meetings, in which other death-row inmates were allowed to sit in and believe they were helping to plan the escape. Often they were deliberately fed false information about the breakout. "The only real stuff any of the outsiders knew was exactly what we wanted them to know," Turner wrote, "so they could run and feed it to the administrative authorities." Later, the core group would meet to discuss the real plans. This group of inmates included the infamous Briley brothers—James and Linwood, a pair of mad-dog killers who were the wild boys of death row. They were dopers, sexual predators, and troublemakers, but they had connections with the guards, and Turner felt he could control them, because he was in charge of the weapons. Also, he had veto power over proposed plans, and he exercised it when the Brileys suggested that each inmate put glass in his food, draw blood from his body with a syringe, swallow the blood, and then regurgitate it, claiming injury from the ingested glass; they would all be rushed to the hospital, and confederates there would break them free. Willie vetoed that idea, invoking another of his steadfast rules: "I objected to it because of my principle to never fake illness as a means of an escape."

The plan finally agreed upon was an elaborately detailed, minutely choreographed scheme, requiring that each of the conspirators, who numbered eight, execute his role perfectly. The strategy was simple. On the way back from evening recreation, one of the inmates would duck into the guards' rest room and wait there until, hearing a signal from one of the others, he would overpower the guard at the control booth. He would then release the seven others, who, armed with the knives Turner had made, would take the remaining officers on duty hostage, one by one. The inmates would change clothes with the guards, and force one guard to call the main office and say that a bomb had been found on death row and that a van was needed to take it away from the institution. The inmates, wearing guards' uniforms and carrying the "bomb"—a TV set covered with some blankets—would run to the van and drive away from the prison.


THE MUSEUM OF GRANT-FREE ART
I DON'T KNOW WHERE I'D BE WITHOUT KLEENEE PRODUCTS
KLEENEE
Thanks, Mom and Dad!
FRUIT: Courtesy of Marvin's Corner Market
BOWL: Pottery Patio
TABLE: Miles of Tables
R. Chast

It was a good plan, and to make it better Turner secretly prepared contingency support, which included planting two real pipe bombs in the television set, in case he and the others needed to blow their way out. On the eve of May 31st, the would-be escapees held one last meeting. Turner wrote later that he had told them that "the whole thing could go wrong and turn into a blood bath in which we are sure to die," but had added that "if it worked, then it would be the biggest and most brilliantly planned escape operation in the nation." Alone in his cell, he made one last check, testing the gun's firing pin, checking his stash, and hot-wiring his cell door.

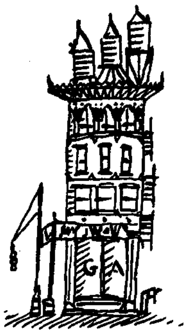
On the morning of the breakout, Turner later wrote, "the sun was shining brightly, the feeling was right and it felt like this was going to be my last day there." By 6 P.M., recreation time, the plan was still a go, and on the way back in from the yard one of the inmates slipped into the rest room, as planned. He overtook the guard, released the others, and the escape was on. Willie had insisted that the operation be conducted with discipline—"a show of pure pride, principles, and dignity," he'd said—but it quickly became clear that dignity would be tested. Turner had to stop Linwood Briley and another inmate from raping one of the hostages, a nurse, and he subsequently came upon James Briley just as he was about to splash two bottles of pure alcohol over the hostages and set fire to them. When Turner interrupted him, Briley said, "Come on, Turner . . . I just want to leave my mark on 'em." According to one inmate's affidavit, Turner replied, "If you're going to kill somebody, you will have to kill me first," and Briley backed off.

Turner became convinced that Briley's freelancing would produce the bloodbath he had feared, and for that reason, he later wrote, he decided not to escape along with the others. When they were gone, he freed the hostages, burned the written script for the plan, and re-stashed his knives, ropes, and other gear. Before returning to his cell, though, he pressed the key to the control booth against a bar of soap, making an impression that he could duplicate for future use.

The escape, as Turner had predicted, was a spectacular show of daring and planning, which drew national news coverage. The inmates who broke out of Mecklenburg—six in all, since a second prisoner had also refused to leave—ditched the prison van about thirty miles away from the prison and split up. Driving a stolen pickup, the Brileys made it to Philadelphia before being caught, and two of the others made their way to Vermont and were captured there. The fact that all the prisoners were eventually captured reflects more on the stupidity of the escapees (two were found drinking wine in a laundromat) than on the escape itself, which easily ranks among the most extraordinary episodes in the great body of prison-escape literature.

"OH, there's no question about it, he was very clever about concealment and the way he came on to other people, including employees. He was certainly a sharp talker—a 'slicker,' as we call them in the institution." J. D. Netherland, the current warden at Mecklenburg, is showing me Willie Turner's cell, C-Pod No. 68, which is empty. It is a tiny space, six feet by ten, and has a spareness about it that gives it the illusion of innocence. Netherland shows me the table whose leg became a weapons bin; the wall with its invisible incision; and the louvred window, whose metal frame Willie claimed to have cut so that the bars could be removed at will. For all I know, some of Willie's stuff may be in there still. "Willie Turner was very ingenious at hiding things," the warden says.

Netherland, who is known as a tough security expert, first came to Mecklenburg as assistant warden in 1984, during a shakeup at the prison following the breakout. Turner was not punished for it, perhaps because of his intervention on behalf of the hostages, but there was no particular need for punishment anyway, because within a year he was transferred to the state penitentiary in Richmond to be executed.



The Briley brothers had been caught in Philadelphia, where they were barbecuing chicken outside a garage, and Linwood went to the electric chair before the year was out. Of the group, James was next on the execution list, followed by Willie. Turner arrived at the pen in April of 1985, and was put in the death house just after James Briley's execution. There, he wrote, he had a last intimation of James:

> As I walked in I could hear and see hundreds of fat green flies fighting over something stinking in a bag box sitting on the inside by the door. The stuff in the box consisted of a white death row prisoner jump suit which was spotted with blood, burnt marks, human feces, vomit, and some white and other awful looking stuff. And the entire area had a strong smell of burnt flesh combined with the even stronger offensive smell coming from the stuff in the box. Though I had never in my life smelt anything like it, I knew it was a smell of death.

In the final days before his scheduled execution, Turner watched the prison death team do its chores, such as hanging blankets over the windows of the execution room. On the morning of May 2, 1985, Turner was awakened by the crackle and hum of the electric chair as it was being tested. The execution was scheduled for 11 P.M., and at about six, just as the execution team arrived to shave Turner's head for the electrodes, word came that the United States Supreme Court refused to lift a lower court's stay of his execution.

Turner had prepared himself to die, and he now wondered whether he would be ready the next time. "I was certain that there would be a next time around," he wrote. "It was just a matter of how long it would take."

It took ten years. In that time, his confinement took a hellish turn. He was sent back to the Powhatan prison, and was ultimately kept in its isolation and segregation units for more than seven years. The isolation unit, where Turner spent five years, was a particularly inhospitable environment. In a declaration written for a court proceeding this year Turner described life in that unit:

> Unhappy prisoners made such a practice of throwing feces that the basement always smelled like an outhouse and the walls of the hall were often covered with feces. It was a normal thing in Isolation for prisoners to keep containers of feces around, in case an occasion for throwing it arose. Some guys doctored their feces with urine, eggs, aftershave, and other stuff, so it would cover better or penetrate into more places. Sometimes they'd keep it until it fermented, which they said made it stink more and stick better. They would argue for hours about who was the best "brewer." Some prisoners got to where they could identify other prisoners' "brews." I don't think they held onto any batch too long; it was made for throwing and they threw it. . . .
>
> Guards wore plastic face shields quite often when they passed through Isolation. Sometimes the guards would get so frustrated they'd pick up feces and throw it back. If the guards shook down a guy's cell and discovered "brew," sometimes they'd keep it and throw it at the guy later.
>
> One thing that always bothered me was that the guards brought us our food through the hall where all this feces throwing was aimed. The food came in Styrofoam containers, but they weren't airtight. On innumerable occasions, I've had trays arrive at my cell bearing feces or other unidentifiable disgusting stuff. Even if the tray seemed clean, you could never be sure it had come through that hall in sanitary condition.

Turner, however, remained undeterred in his work on "unauthorized projects," and busily plotted another escape. Then, one night last year, Powhatan guards came to search his cell following reports of Turner scraping his toilet with a metal object. When the guards observed that he had cut a hole in the toilet and asked him how he had done it, Turner, apparently hoping for leniency, directed them to his hiding places. By his account, he showed them handmade keys hidden in the fake bottoms of a peanut-butter jar and a watch box; he also showed them a hole in the concrete ceiling, made by a bar that Turner had removed from his cell and used as a digging tool. They were shown Turner's own key to the wall gate, which he told them he kept only in case of an emergency—he feared being caught helpless in a fire. In the isolation unit, Turner showed them the holes in his toilet, created when he made keys, and a vent duct in front of his old cell which held two fake .44s, a three-foot samurai sword, a long knife, and a listening device.

Shortly thereafter, Turner was transferred to the death house in Greensville.

CORRECTIONAL MEDICAL SERVICES, a private contractor that provides psychological counselling to the Greensville prison, has a steadfast rule against fraternization with inmates. A thirty-four-year-old psychologist named Caroline Schloss broke it on her third day on the job, in early June of 1994. She had been making rounds with her supervisor, who detoured briefly on an errand into the segregation/protective custody building where Willie was now being housed. As Schloss stood waiting, she felt something—"You know that feeling that someone's watching you?" she says—and when she turned she met the stare of a small, well-built man who was standing shirtless, with his arms folded across his chest. Schloss knew all about staring: in her training, she had learned that staring was a well-known game of the sociopath. Schloss glared back, and felt the gust of a force that she describes as almost physical. "I mean, he was *emanating*," she says. "It was like he was radiating, you know? I mean, he was. He was almost putting out this radiation, which I felt. You know when you look through a lens and see body heat? He was radiating that."

The prisoner finally spoke, saying something coy about how he was trying to look scary because there were so many tough guys in that place, and Schloss found herself flirting back. When she was called away, the inmate said he would like to telephone her, and she hoped he would call.

Caroline Schloss didn't know what to think about the encounter, but she began making excuses to visit the unit. She and Turner had intense elliptical conversations. "I had never, ever met a man in my life who gave me knots in my stomach," she says.

Schloss, a tiny woman, quite fit, with dark eyes, long dark hair, and a barely contained energy that suggests movement even when she is sitting still, had had boyfriends but never any really serious relationships. As a child she was a tomboy, and as an adult she was drawn to work traditionally performed by men. She has driven a truck, delivering construction pipe in an eighteen-wheeler, and she became a psychologist only after trying her hand at bridge building, dirtbike riding, aerobics instruction, kickboxing, and championship arm wrestling, among other pursuits.

Caroline was clearly mesmerized by Turner, with his ostensible otherworldly wisdom and his casual calm about his circumstances. ("You're in my house now," he used to tell her. "This is my home.") Turner gave Caroline his typewritten manuscript, and she made reading it her homework; after reading a section of it she would sit for hours outside his cell, "learning from him." His tales of prison life were sprinkled with epigrams from his con's philosophy. ("Go beyond reason, but never go against reason.")

Caroline claims that she was struck one day by the realization that she had somehow met Willie Turner before, and then remembered an occasion in the summer of 1978 when she was just out of high school and was seeing a friend in Franklin. They had gone to the Dairy Queen, and there Caroline met a very smooth-talking young black man and gave him her phone number. She was now certain that it was Willie.

As Caroline read Willie's typewritten life story, she was moved by his talk of a "relationship that happens once in a century." (For a man who had spent most of his life behind bars, Willie knew a lot about relationships; in the nineteen-eighties he had arranged to marry a friend of a friend, who occasionally sent him money. They no longer communicated.) Caroline's visits, two dozen over last fall and winter, sometimes lasted for hours, and when she wasn't with Willie in the prison they spoke by phone; their calls never lasted less than an

PHOTO ALBUM

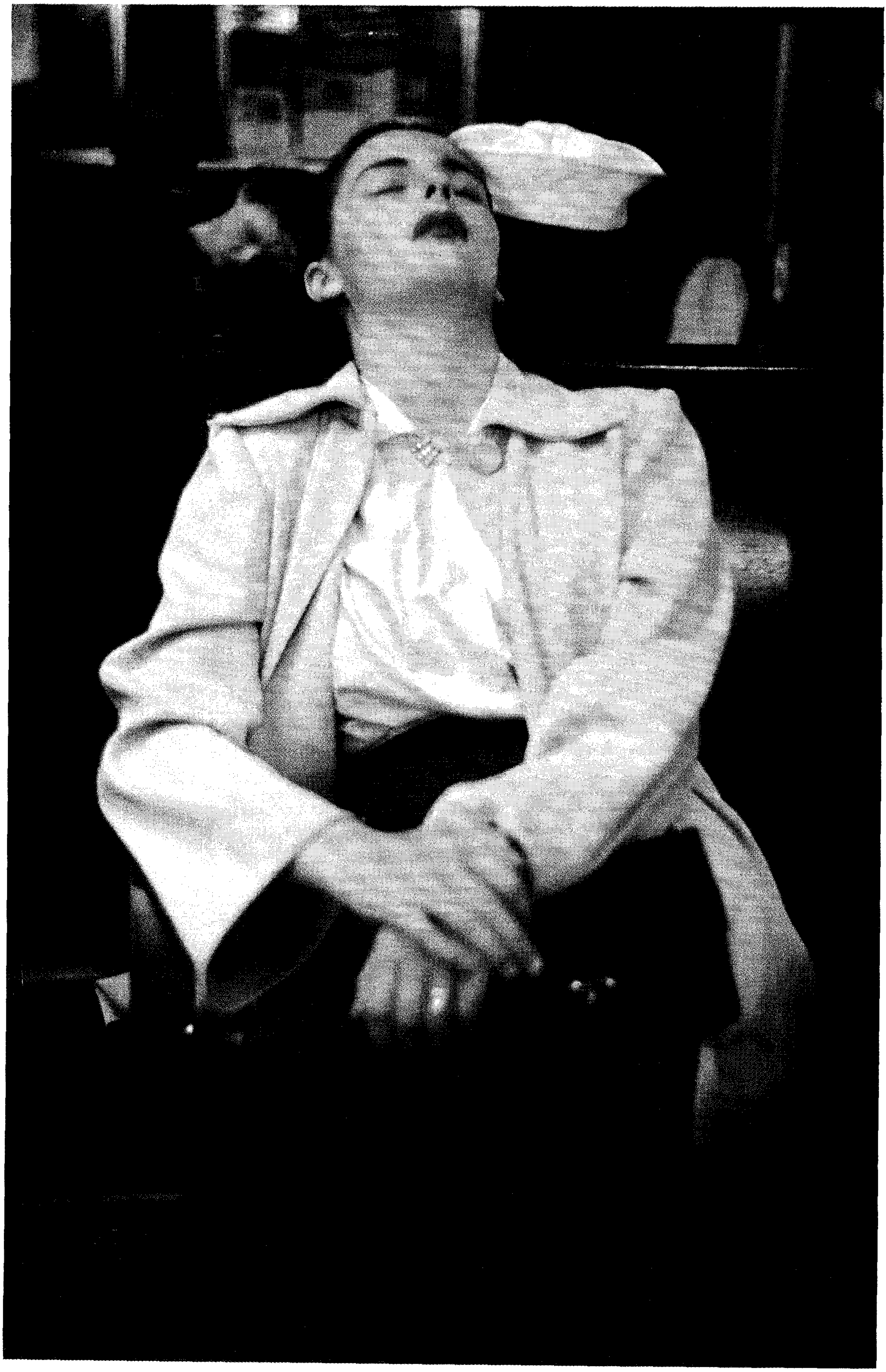
ERWITT'S EYE

ELLIOTT ERWITT, whose photographs are now on view at a retrospective show at the Houk Friedman gallery, makes brilliant cartoons. That sounds easier than it is: really pulling off a photographic cartoon requires wit, originality, and an uncommon alertness. These qualities are abundant in all of Erwitt's best work, along with empathy, a willingness to be surprised (and sometimes outraged), and a highly attuned sense of the journalistic moment. He is wise enough to know that you don't want to be ponderous or didactic if you want people to keep on looking.

The son of Russian émigrés, Erwitt was born in Paris in 1928 and spent his first ten years in Milan. His family moved to the States at the start of the Second World War and soon settled in Los Angeles. His experience as an outsider must have sharpened his eye—an eye that Erwitt put to use when he embarked on a career in commercial photography. He moved to New York in 1948. Five years later, he joined Magnum Photos, and he has been a member of the agency ever since.

Erwitt's timing is uncanny: he picks up the fleeting details and accidental relationships that come and go in the speed and flux of life. Sometimes the camera has a mind of its own, and Erwitt exploits this for all it's worth. The retrospective includes a chilling shot, from 1953, of a crowd in Washington that has just received news of the execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg: there is glee in some of the faces, bafflement and horror in others. In a different vein is a sly shot taken at an English nudist camp in 1968, featuring a man with his back to the camera: he may be bare-butt naked, but he's still a British gentleman. The photograph reproduced here was taken at a bus station in Fernandina, Florida, in 1950. It's a classic Erwitt: the camera makes a couple out of what seem to be two strangers. The lady's head lolls toward the sailor's, her lipsticked mouth relaxes—one wonders if they missed the bus.—INGRID SISCHY

PHOTOGRAPH
BY ELLIOTT ERWITT
Fernandina, Florida, 1950.



hour. "My phone bill was thousands of dollars," she says, "but do you see a worried look in my eye?" She ascribed to Turner almost supernatural powers and Solomonic wisdom, and requested "Teach me, Willie."

Willie presented Caroline with a handmade "marriage certificate," and they established a strange, doom-struck parody of a conventional marriage. She got him to stop using blasphemous profanity, they exercised "together" (that is, they scheduled their routines for the same time of day), and Caroline began to look after Willie's personal business. They even imagined what their lives together in the free world might be (Caroline would do all the driving), but the limits on the reality of such lives were always present. On one occasion, they managed to engage in a sort of flash sex, exposing themselves to each other from either side of a table. Prison officials tried to halt the affair, and Caroline's superiors gave her the choice of ending her romance with Willie or leaving her job. She quit, and joined Turner's legal team as a paralegal.

Caroline and Willie spent much of their last months together working on Willie's manuscript, which he had begun at Powhatan and put aside in 1990 with the words "Gotta go now," and never resumed. It is a long, rambling memoir of questionable factual accuracy, as might be expected of a master con's effort to explain away a life of violence and crime; his versions of his crimes have a decided my-dog-ate-my-homework quality. But Turner possessed the storyteller's gift, and his manuscript contains patches of narrative that bring his prison world vividly to life. *The New Yorker* acquired rights to the manuscript, and although the magazine ultimately chose not to serialize it, Caroline still hopes for a book sale. That may bring complications: Virginia has a "Son-of-Sam law," mandating that under certain circumstances profits from the recounting of a crime be made available to victims and their families, and Billy Smith means to see the law applied to Turner's book. Caroline, for her part, maintains that money is secondary to her interest in having Willie's story told.

Some of Caroline's friends and family have sharply questioned her decision to abandon her career for a doomed killer, but such romances are apparently not altogether uncommon. Jan Elvin, formerly of the A.C.L.U., who knew Willie during most of his time on death row, says that she was not surprised by the relationship. "People fall in love with prisoners—probably more than most people would like to think."

When I asked Caroline for a detached psychological assessment of a woman who falls in love with a condemned man, she said, "I would have said, 'Oh, here's another inmate who managed to con a girl into thinking that he likes her so that he can have somebody,' or 'Here's a weak employee who finds readily accessible men in an institute that is all male.' Pick one—a very weak person, or a desperate person." But her case, she says, is different. "I've looked for the man of my life all my life."

One evening when I was interviewing Caroline Schloss at her home in Virginia, she removed a loaded .45 from her purse. She carried it for protection, she said. I asked her a question that I knew was also on the minds of the Virginia State Police investigators: "Did you get Willie that gun he had on death row?"

No, she said. It would have been impossible to get it past security, with the metal detectors and the body searches, even if she had wanted to. "Besides," she added, "if I had wanted to take Willie a gun, it would not have been just a peashootin', cap-poppin' little gun, I can tell you that right now."

EIGHT years ago, Walter Walvick, a litigator specializing in telecommunications at the Washington firm of Dickstein, Shapiro & Morin, had never given much thought to the issue of capital punishment, but in 1988 his firm, responding to a plea from the American Bar Association that major law firms donate time to death-row cases, decided to take on Willie Turner as a client. Walvick, a big man with rumpled clothes and a kindly nature, agreed to help out.

By death-row standards, Turner's case was ancient by the time Walvick became involved in it, and the very fact that Turner was still alive was due to a twist in his case that had piqued the interest of the Supreme Court. In Turner's 1979 trial, for the murder of Jack Smith, the trial judge refused to allow prospective jurors to be questioned on the issue of racial prejudice. That is difficult to imagine today, especially in the light of the O. J. Simpson trial, but sixteen years ago it was still an undecided issue. There was plenty of evidence to suggest that racial attitudes might play a role in deciding capital cases, including the fact that black-against-white murders were several times as likely to yield a death sentence as were intraracial killings. The Supreme Court decided to consider Turner's case, thereby saving him from the electric chair in 1985, and the next year the Court overturned his death sentence. Turner still stood convicted of murder, but a new trial was ordered, strictly to consider whether he should live or die.

In early May of 1986, Turner was released from death row and allowed into the general prison population for the first time since 1975. He began to think of a future, and, of course, got married, but the jury in the second trial, after deliberating for several hours, also recommended the death sentence, and Turner began his long stay in Powhatan's isolation and segregation units.

In reading the record of the second trial, Walvick quickly discovered something that startled him: in trying to persuade the jury not to sentence their client to death, Turner's court-appointed lawyers had failed to present mitigating evidence showing that Turner had become a changed man since the killing of Jack Smith. "For members of that jury," Walvick says, "it just gets down to the whole question: 'Is there some reason to spare Willie? Tell me something good about him. Why should I not kill him?' " Then he answers those questions the way he believes Turner's lawyers in the second trial should have: "Well, he got a patent, that was pretty good. He learned to read and write, that's pretty good—it shows that he grows. And he came from this really shitawful environment. Maybe it's not a reason to spare his life, but it helps you to understand why he did what he did. And look at all this good stuff he did at Mecklenburg." In Walvick's view, Turner's behavior during the Mecklenburg breakout, standing between the hostages and the bad intentions of the Briley brothers, should have been a decisive factor. "What happened during the breakout itself, where many, many people said he contributed to law and order, the safety of the hostages—I mean, he was really a hero," Walvick says.

Even if Walvick was right, it was too late to fight the second death sentence directly, since it had already gone through the appeals process. But there was an opening. Because mitigating evidence about Turner had not been presented at the resentencing trial, Walvick thought that he could make the case that Turner had been inadequately represented by his court-appointed lawyers. Walvick believed that with Dickstein, Shapiro & Morin now behind him Turner had every chance of winning. "We are good lawyers," Walvick says. "We're winners. You take these cases and you sit down, you learn about the law in the particular area, you learn about the facts, you get into this stuff, and you say, 'Shit, man, this is pretty hot stuff here. We've got a couple of pretty good issues.' I mean, I couldn't imagine that we were going to lose when we started. Just couldn't imagine it." Numerous appeals and hearings ensued, but none were successful; last March the Supreme Court denied Turner's request that it review his case, sealing his fate.

"And then I met some computer people who could make it look as if I were talking."

• •

INEVITABLY, the subject of escape came up between Caroline Schloss and Willie. Caroline knew that Willie had a plan to break out of Greensville ("He could have escaped from there, I am sure"), but she says he refused to discuss it with her. She also says she told him at one point that, much as she loved him, she would be compelled to turn him in if he tried to break out. Then, as the execution date neared, Caroline worried that she might be the reason he was staying in, and she even tried to end the relationship. "I tried that, and it didn't work," she says. "He would not let me sever those ties. And he told me he knew what I was doing. He said, 'No, it won't work, I'm not going to let you do that, you're not going to do that.' . . . I felt as if I might have been holding him in there."

Caroline says that Willie jokingly began "practicing to die"—lying on the floor of his cell and apparently imagining the end. He also began to talk of Jack Smith and his family. In a letter written to Walt Walvick and the rest of the defense team on March 17th Turner said, "I chiefly blame my poor sense of judgment in my earlier days for my being in this ugly situation. Please know also that our concerns and efforts to stay alive are in no way with disregards to Mr. Smith and his family and friends. For we are real concerned for them, too."

The execution was scheduled for 9 P.M. on May 25th. The countdown to death was a familiar experience for Turner, who had been given numerous execution dates, and as the moment neared he began hinting to Caroline that something was up. Back at the state pen, when he had come within hours of execution, he had planned to try to kill as many guards as he could before they killed him. This time, he had a loaded gun in the typewriter just outside his cell. But he left it there, along with his note saying "Smile."

Turner declined the invitation to make an official last statement, but as the lines were being inserted in his arm he asked, "When is it going to start? Will I feel it?" Witnesses reported that his lips trembled as he spoke.

Billy Smith and one of his sisters were viewing the event from an observation room, and Billy was too nervous to sit. He watched the poisons do their work, and he saw Willie Turner quietly die. "It was just like he went to sleep," Billy says.

But the story of Willie Turner wasn't yet over. He had left a mystery behind: How had he got the gun, and why hadn't he used it? The investigation by the state police didn't say so expressly, but the evidence suggests the possibility that Turner had obtained the gun with the help of a dirty guard. As to why he hadn't used it in the end, everyone offered a guess. Billy Smith thought that Turner knew he would get killed if he tried a breakout, and preferred the quieter death of lethal injection. Willie's uncle James said that Willie had just had enough of trouble, and had told him so in a phone call a few weeks before the execution: "He told me two weeks before, 'I'm not gonna put y'all through nothing else. I have put y'all through enough.' But he said, 'But I'm gonna let you know they couldn't do this to me if I didn't let 'em.' That's what he told me."

"I think he wanted to show them that he was smarter than they were," Jan Elvin, the former A.C.L.U. paralegal, says. "I think part of it was just plain 'Gotcha!' and I think the other part was that he didn't really want to go out that way. He wanted to go out in a way that didn't harm anyone, and didn't bring anybody else down with him. That, to him, would sort of fit in with his self-respect, his demanding idea of himself."

Busting out would have meant leaving prison, and prison was the only place in the world where Willie Turner had ever fitted in. He had earned the reputation of a prison Houdini, which suggested the final paradox of his life: Turner's greatest talent was for escape, but on the outside there was no possibility of escape; he was lost. "There wasn't nowhere for him," his uncle James says. "They couldn't keep him in the penitentiary, and he couldn't deal with society. Where else could he be? Where else was there for him? Had for them to kill him." ♦

PROFILE

YOU GOT A PROBLEM?

For forty years, Ann Landers has consulted politicians and theologians and her own uncanny common sense to come up with advice about etiquette and America's social taboos. And what she's learned could twirl your turban.

BY CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY

EPPIE LEDERER, all hair, cheekbones, and dimples, stands in the doorway of her Chicago apartment. "Hello," she says, with a bit of a Mae West purr. It feels a little odd saying this about a seventy-seven-year-old great-grandmother, but there is something ineffably sexy about her. Maybe it's the voice, or the perfume, or the rustle of silk, or the knowing, Listen-honey-I've-heard-it-all eyes. Maybe it's the aura of unshockability she projects. You feel you could tell her something truly dire about your secret life and she'd just nod understandingly and tell you not to worry, she hears from people like you all the time, and she'd give you the phone number of some specialist at Johns Hopkins with a Hungarian-sounding surname who deals with this particular weirdness. At any rate, the woman the world knows as Ann Landers looks younger than seventy-seven, by quite a lot, and she *has* heard it all before.

"The changes I have seen," she once wrote, "would twirl your turban." In mid-October she quietly marked her fortieth anniversary of working seven days a week dispensing advice to the lorn, the afflicted, the battered, the diseased, the lonely, and the confused. According to the syndicate that distributes her column, it currently runs in over twelve hundred newspapers, with a total circulation of ninety million.

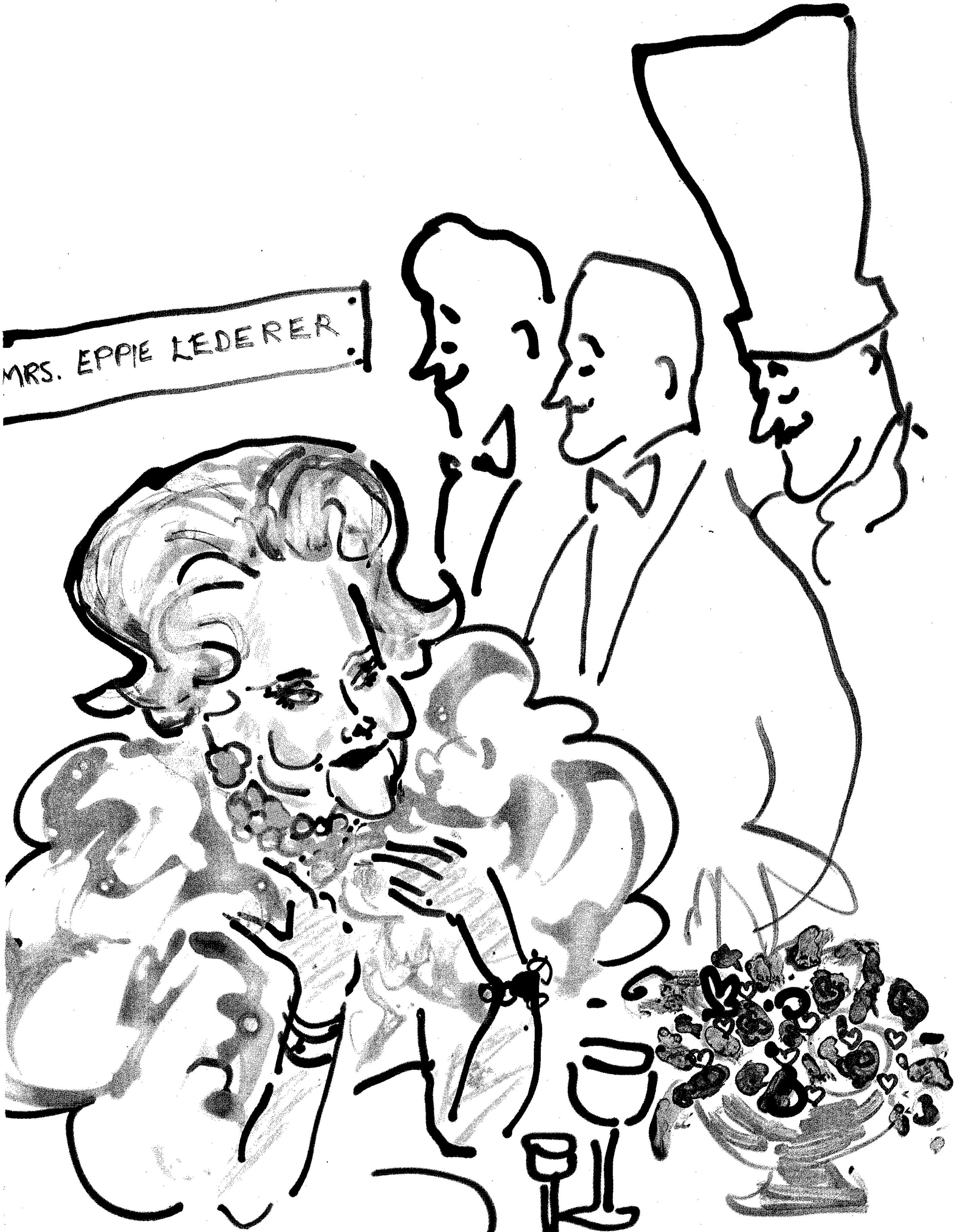
Ann Landers has brought Eppie Lederer fame, fortune, authority, and power. She uses honorary degrees for wallpaper. Presidents fawn over her, institutes put her on their boards. A plug from her can send a book onto the best-seller list. All this has brought her enemies, too—chiefly gun owners, pro-lifers, and laboratory-rat huggers. On occasion, she has faltered: she has been caught recycling old letters, fiddling with the wording of others, and, in one instance, causing an organ-donation controversy that resulted in the unfortunate headline "ADVICE COLUMN MAY HAVE LIFE-THREATENING CONSEQUENCES." In each case, she has quickly come clean, and self-administered her trademark "forty lashes with the wet noodle." If readers disagree with advice she has given, she prints the letters. She has never caused a sex scandal, got drunk (she has never touched alcohol or smoked a cigarette), endorsed products, or done infomercials. "People know I'm on the level," she says.

A *World Almanac* poll once named Ann Landers the most influential woman in the United States. A few years ago, a Cornell professor spent four years computerizing, summarizing, and analyzing every column she had written, and came to the same conclusion. Her willingness to grapple with social taboos just as they are about to burst out of the national closet has given her a credibility, even a certain aura of progressiveness, when in fact her values are generally straight-down-the-middle American. Through four decades of change, she has remained tolerant, traditional, cautious, and concerned more with the consequences of behavior than with its inherent morality. She was against the Vietnam War but visited the troops. She is an ardent feminist, but believes that a mother's place is with her children during their early years.

Her apartment overlooks Lake Michigan. She gives me a short tour, high heels clicking on parquet. In the library, there's a Dali bust of J.F.K. and the framed front page of the Des Moines *Register* of July 4, 1918 ("HUNS FAIL IN COUNTER BLOW"), the day she was born. Beneath this, also framed, is an odd tchotchke: one of Mary Todd Lincoln's handkerchiefs. She does not think it is from that night at Ford's Theatre. I'm tempted to linger and contemplate the significance of having on your wall the *mouchoir* of the fruitiest First Lady in American history, but we're off to the living room, which has a nearly photographic Picasso self-portrait, and then we move on to the Tudor dining room, all dark panelling and mullioned windows and escutcheons. Somehow, we find ourselves in the master bathroom, an arresting chocolate-and-red eighteenth-century Italian-mosaic-tile fantasy installed by the apartment's original owner. "A nut," she pronounces.

TIME to leave for dinner. Bobby, Eppie's chauffeur, is waiting downstairs with the Cadillac limousine to take us around the block to her usual dinner haunt, the International Club, on the mezzanine of the Drake Hotel. Ignoring my protests, she had insisted before I left home on sending Bobby to fetch me at O'Hare. Bobby had further been instructed, despite vehement objections from me, to wait outside the Drake while I showered, and then to convey me the five hundred feet to the entrance to her apartment. It was like visiting an attentive, rich grandmother; and I might as well confess, at the risk of impaired journalistic integrity, that I enjoyed every minute of it.

At the restaurant, the maître d' fusses over her and leads the way to her usual table, designated by a brasslike plaque inscribed "Mrs. Eppie Lederer." She orders escargots and crab cakes and water, and I ask how she came to grow up in Sioux City, Iowa. Her parents, fleeing czarist pogroms, had emigrated from Vladivostok, by way of Manchuria, in 1908, indigent and speaking no English. Her father, Abe Friedman, started out peddling chickens in the Midwest and


MRS. EPPIE LEDERER

Landers: "I would run into Joseph McCarthy and he would grab me and hug me. And I couldn't bear it. Same thing with Nixon."

ended up owning, as she puts it, with affecting lack of boastfulness, "every theatre in Sioux City except the Orpheum." His twin daughters, Esther (Eppie) and Pauline (Popo), born in Sioux City on July 4th, 1918, eventually became, as Ann Landers and Abigail Van Buren ("Dear Abby"), the most widely circulated advice columnists in his adopted land. In the words of Yogi Berra when he was informed that a Jew had been elected Lord Mayor of Dublin, "Only in America."

In 1939, Eppie married Jules Lederer, a salesman who later started a company called Budget Rent a Car. (Money has never been a worry, and therefore never a motivating factor, in Eppie's life.) They had a daughter, Margo (she is now a freelance writer, has three grown children and three grandchildren, and lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts). They moved to Wisconsin, where Eppie's volunteer work soon got her elected chairman—even now she does not use "chairwoman"—of the Eau Claire County Democratic Party; and in 1955 they moved to Chicago. That year, she became famous.

The original Ann Landers was a nurse whose column ran in the Chicago *Sun-Times* and was syndicated in about two dozen newspapers. When she died unexpectedly, Eppie applied for the job, along with about thirty other aspiring advice columnists. They were all asked to answer an identical set of hypothetical letters from readers. The first set out the dilemma of a woman whose walnut tree was dropping nuts onto her neighbor's property. They had exchanged words about it. Who owned the walnuts? Eppie had been an assiduous networker during her years as a Democratic Party official. She called up her friend Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas and put the question to him. The answer was that the neighbor could do anything she wanted with the walnuts except sell them. The next question was from a worried Catholic who wanted to marry a Protestant. Eppie turned to her friend Father Theodore Hesburgh, the president of Notre Dame University. Hesburgh advised that the marriage could proceed, but only if the Protestant agreed to raise the children as Catholics. And so on.

She submitted her extravagantly sourced answers. The editor in charge of the column called her up and sputtered, "You can't use these people's names! They'll sue us!" Marshall Field, the publisher of the *Sun-Times*, telephoned her a few days later and said, "Good morning, Ann Landers." The column was an immediate success. She stayed with the *Sun-Times* until 1987, the year she bolted across the street to the *Tribune*.

Her sister Popo, recognizing a good thing when she saw it, followed her into the advice-column biz a scant three months later. This did not do wonders for sibling relations. Indeed, Eppie and Popo did not speak for years. Creators Syndicate says that "Ann Landers" appears in about twelve hundred papers. The Universal Press Syndicate, which distributes "Dear Abby," claims a suspiciously similar number of papers. Both companies adamantly refuse to provide a list of their client papers. As for the principals, they wisely refuse to discuss the rivalry, preferring to rise above. By way of calming the tempest in this particular teapot, suffice it to say that the two nice Jewish sisters from Sioux City, Iowa, eventually kissed and made up.

WHAT a kinder, gentler time the fifties seems! The letters that flooded in to Ann Landers then were, for the most part, about acne, or not having a date for the senior prom, or having an inattentive husband. But there were others, too.

In her first year, Eppie published a letter from a young man who wondered how to get Mom and Dad to accept his romantic partner. Homosexuality, of course, was still locked away deep in the closet, behind the winter overcoats. She suggested family counselling. The publisher of the St. Joseph, Michigan, paper refused to print the column, and told the syndicator that he would run a front-page notice explaining that "Ann Landers" would not appear that day because it dealt with a subject not fit for family reading.

Recalling the episode forty years later, she is still indignant. "I called the publisher up and said, 'This is a human problem, and that is what I do.' He said, 'I'm not going to print it.' I said, 'Fine. Then everyone in St. Joe is going to buy the Detroit *Free Press* to see what you won't print.' I called the *Free Press* and told them to get ready for a lot of extra sales"—throaty laugh—"because I know human nature. They're going to buy the other paper to find out what it is, this 'isn't fit for family reading,' I said. Well, that was the last time I had to do something like that. From then on, boy, that St. Joe paper printed every damn word I wrote."

That was then. Earlier this year, she got into trouble with gay readers for recommending that the longtime boyfriend of a bridegroom's father not attend the impending nuptials if his presence would be an embarrassment. "Well, my God," she says, launching into a riff based on sackfuls of fulminant mail that that bit of advice had brought. " 'What do you mean, "embarrassment"? This is his partner for seventeen years and you want him to leave him home? Are you crazy?' It was amazing to me how much flak I got for that." She agrees with her critics. "Unfortunately, I did not show the gutsiness I should have shown," she concedes, administering herself a lash with the wet noodle.

Despite the changes that have sent her turban twirling over the past forty years—she's gone from bad breath to AIDS, from spoiled brats to machine-pistol-wielding ten-year-olds, from a puff of pot to crack babies (about fifteen per cent of the letters she gets now are drug-related)—she still sounds somewhat reassuring. "The problems basically have not changed in forty years," she told me. "The basic problems are family problems. This is No. 1. It's always been that way, and I suspect it's always going to be that way."

DEAR ANN LANDERS:

Last May my husband asked me if he could wear one of my housedresses while painting the kitchen. He said it would be more comfortable. I said OK. He did look awfully cute, and I told him so. Ever since that time he has been wearing my dresses and wigs and makeup when we are alone. He has asked me to call him Linda when we "play girl friends" as he calls it. . . . I can truthfully say I don't mind . . . Is there anything wrong with it?

HAPPY WOMAN WHO
LOVES HER HUSBAND

DEAR WOMAN:

My opinion is of no consequence. The only thing that matters is what you think, and apparently you think it is just fine. . . . Just make sure the doors are locked and the shades down. And say hello to Linda.

"Now," she says after the waiter assures her that the crab cakes are on their way. "What about you?"

This is a legacy from her father, Abe, who once told her, "You never learn anything while you're talking." But there is nothing to learn from me, other than my yearning to wear a housedress and Manolo Blahniks and have my wife call me Lulu, so we talk some more about her, about a few issues of the day, and about people who have figured in her very public life.

How much money the column earns her: "Oh, I wouldn't answer that. You know that. But when I started to do this I was not interested in the money. I was married to a man whose wealth supported me very well."

Her sister's column: "I just don't discuss her in any piece on me. And there have been a lot of good pieces on her, and my name doesn't come up, and I think that's the way it should be."

Politics: "I make a concerted effort to keep politics out of my column. You can't tell from my column whether I'm a Democrat or a Republican."

David Brinkley: "A master at letting other people talk."

George Will: "He can't resist the temptation to tell you how smart he is."

Ted Koppel: "I've always thought that he would make a terrific lawyer."

Geraldo Rivera: "Oh, he's so trashy."

Guns: "The proliferation of guns in this country is unreal."

The National Rifle Association: "I have nothing more to say to these people."

Interracial marriages: "One subject I have not dealt with in a column, because the roof would fall in, and I don't need that."

Marijuana laws: "Ridiculous. I don't want it legalized, but I don't think you should have to go to jail for ten years if you get caught smoking a joint."

Eleanor Roosevelt: "A great woman. A great woman. Big woman. I was amazed when I met her. I mean, she's *huge*. She asked a lot of questions, which I found interesting."

Senator Joseph McCarthy: "Living in Wisconsin, I would run into him and he would grab me and hug me. And I couldn't bear it. Because I disliked him intensely."

Nixon: "Same thing with Nixon. He would always greet me very warmly, and I couldn't bear it. He never got it."

Joseph Kennedy, Sr.: "A monster. Duplicitous, mean-spirited, anti-Semitic."

Meeting President Kennedy in the Oval Office when she went there as the national chairman of the Christmas Seals campaign against TB: "He was so attractive. A knockout. Sex appeal oozed from his every pore. He was the womanizer from Hell. I mean, this guy had women all over the place. In the swimming pool, the locker room. Of course, he had a bum back, for one thing, and the women had to do all the work."

Teddy Kennedy: "A superb senator. Superb. Standing up for all the right things. . . . I know, Chappaquiddick—and being drunk is no excuse, and he was plenty drunk that night, plenty drunk. But he certainly— If you can redeem yourself from a thing like that, he has done it."

Ronald Reagan: "A sweet guy. You know, he's totally gone. I had a letter from Nancy just a few weeks ago, and she said, 'I feel like half a person.' "

Nancy Reagan: "People used to make fun of the Nancy gaze, but she really meant it. They really were so in love with each other that they had no room in their hearts for their children. This is one of the sad things."

Hillary Clinton: "I like her enormously. She's badly mistreated by the press, badly mistreated. . . . She doesn't deserve this."

Bill Clinton: "I don't think he's fooling around anymore. Nor do I think he will. I read that Hillary threw a lamp at him. I read that. Did you read that? You know something? I think she did."

Bill and Hillary Clinton: "They make their own fun, those two. They make their own fun."

Vince Foster's suicide, Whitewater, etc.: "Not much fun there."

Her friendship with Father Hesburgh: "The greatest unfertilized romance in the history of the world."

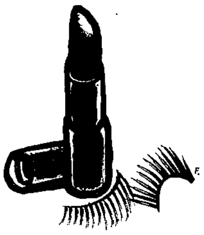
The Catholic Church's problem with priests who can't keep their hands off the altar boys: "Terrible. They just move them around. They don't throw them out. Now they're getting a little smarter, because they're getting sued. I think, with these problems, eventually the Church is going to have to let the clergy marry."

Bishop Fulton J. Sheen: "Do you remember him? He was a friend of mine. He was charismatic beyond belief. I first heard him speak when I was living in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. I went backstage to meet him. He looked at me and said, 'The metaphysics of a dimple is more profound than simple.' I said, What is going on here with this guy?"

Her visit with him in Washington: "He opened the door at this gorgeous home, great big St. Bernard, like a country gentleman. Living in this estate with this wonderful dog and a Lincoln and driver. I said, 'Not bad for a fellow who took the oath of poverty.' And he said, 'Well, Esther'—he called me Esther, which I thought was interesting—'I'm not an order priest, I'm a diocesan priest, and I didn't take the oath of poverty.' I said, 'Good for you. You did it right.' He had converted Clare Boothe Luce, and people thought maybe this was going to happen to me, and when I told them I was going to visit him they said, 'Uh-oh, be careful.' I said, 'This is not going to happen. I'm Jewish for life.' "

On meeting Pope John Paul II: "Looks like an angel. He has the face of an angel. His eyes are sky blue, and his cheeks are pink and adorable-looking, and he has a sweet sense of humor. Of course, he's a Polack." Laughter. "They're very antiwomen."

Why she hangs out with so many Catholics: "I don't remember my father having any Jewish friends. They were all goyim. He seemed to gravitate to the Gentiles, especially the Catholics."



The North Carolina judge who announced that raped women could not get pregnant because "the juices don't flow": "Did you ever hear of anything so crazy?"

The British Royal Family situation: "It's so sad."

Roseanne: "A psychopath."

The dessert tray: "Forget about that. I've got a divine lemon-meringue pie at home."

SHE leads the way to the study in her apartment, through corridors hung with drawings by her grandchildren and editorial cartoons in which she is mentioned. Her study is crammed with four decades of trophies: keys to what seem to be most American cities and some foreign ones as well; a huge collage of more than a thousand logos of papers that carry the column, including the Oneonta *Star*, the Calgary *Herald*, and the Lubbock *Avalanche-Journal;* and a host of photographs of her standing next to famous people. The shot with President Jimmy Carter shows him clasping her in a rather intimate clinch. ("He wasn't just lusting in his heart," she wisecracks.) Here she is with Walter Annenberg ("Wonderful dancer"), with Hubert Humphrey, with Reagan. A framed triptych of Ted Hesburgh shows him on the day he began at Notre Dame, during the middle of his reign, and on his last day, cleaning out his desk. It is signed, "To Eppie, L but no K, Devotedly, Ted." The "L" stands for "love," the "K" for "kisses"—a long-standing joke between them. Among the dozens of honorary degrees hung on the wall, she points out a photograph of Hesburgh and her, both in cap and gown, after receiving honorary degrees from St. Leo College, in Florida. The priest is planting a big wet K on her cheek.

She has lived alone in the apartment since 1975, which is when she split up with Jules, her husband of thirty-six years. When the reporters found out that Ann Landers, who for twenty years had been advising couples to stick it out for the sake of the children, was getting divorced, the result was—surprise!—a full-court press stakeout downstairs.

She wrote about the divorce in the column, telling her readers that she wanted them to hear it from her and not from the *National Enquirer;* and that she and Jules had had a wonderful relationship but had now decided to go their separate ways. The column was shorter than usual. She asked editors to leave the rest of the space blank, in honor, as she put it, of a great marriage that never made it to the finish line. She received thirty thousand tear-drenched letters of support from her readers.

"What happened was," she says in her sharp Midwestern voice, "he had another dame." An eyebrow arches, the right dimple deepens like a Florida sinkhole. "He told my daughter about it, but he didn't tell me. And this went on and on. Finally, my daughter told him, 'This is a pretty lousy thing you're doing here'—he was keeping this woman in our apartment in London. 'I'm going to give you thirty days, and if you don't tell her I'm going to tell her.' On the thirtieth day, she called him up and said, 'Well, thirty days is up.' But he couldn't quite bring himself to do it. So she called me and said, 'When Daddy comes home for dinner, ask him if he's got anything he wants to tell you.' And I said, 'Oh, boy.' So I did. And he said he's had this other woman for three years. 'That's the way it is,' he said. And I said, 'I'm glad you told me. The marriage is over.' 'Oh,' he said, quite surprised. 'Maybe we can work something out.' I said, 'No. No way.' He asked me to give him a few months to move out. I said, 'I'm not going to give you a lot of time, but I'll give you some time.' Finally, it occurred to me that he wasn't going to move out. He was just hanging around hoping I'd change my mind. Five weeks went by, and he's still there. I said, 'Look, Jules, I don't think you've got the message. I'm going to Athens in two weeks to get an honorary degree. When I come back, I want you out of here.' I went out and bought two dozen pairs of black socks, two dozen pairs of brown socks, two dozen handkerchiefs, a dozen shirts, and a dozen pairs of shorts; wrote down the number of the doctor, the drug store, and the cleaning establishment, and a suggestion for a laundress. They know *nothing* about this. And I said goodbye and good luck. And that was it."

She is single but not unattached. Her companion—she calls him "my gentleman friend"—is a prosperous, well-connected lawyer. They dote on each other, travel together, and synergistically network in the Democratic stables. A month before I went to Chicago, there was this message on my answering machine: "It's Eppie! I'm in the Lincoln bedroom at the White House. I'm having a very good time with the Clintons. I'm calling everyone I know to show off."

On the bookshelves in her study are copies of "Miss Lonelyhearts," "Balm in Gilead," "The Joy of Sex," "Portnoy's Complaint," and "The Bonfire of the Vanities." A bust of Lincoln looks down on a desk strewn with photographs, clippings, and correspondence, including a thank-you letter from the Hereditary Disease Foundation in Santa Monica. Eppie explains, "A reader in Michigan wrote and said, 'I have money but I don't like my family, what should I do?' And I said, 'Give it to the Hereditary Disease Foundation.' " He did. The thank-you letter is, as you might guess, effusive. According to the Chicago *Tribune*, a single column she wrote on another occasion resulted in a hundred million dollars for cancer research.

Amid the desk clutter are five bottles

of Liquid Paper correction fluid. She writes at home on an I.B.M. Selectric III. She has eight secretaries and two clerks at her *Tribune* office, ten blocks away.

About a thousand people write to her each day. The assistants winnow the letters down to about two hundred, and sort those into categories. She shows me her bundles, piled on a chair near the desk, and asks, "What have we got today?"

Today we have "Bad Doctors," "Singles," "Chivalry," "North Carolina Judge," and "Jewish."

I ask to see what they're talking about in "Jewish."

She reads, " 'Dear Ann, We are Jewish parents whose thirty-three-year-old daughter says that she is a Jewish Christian. Jesus is the messiah and Jews and Christians worship the same god. How do you react to such a daughter? We are both shocked and distraught.' "

What's happening in "Chivalry"?

A recent column featured a letter from a woman in her ninth month of pregnancy who complained that no one on the bus would give up a seat. The men, Eppie says, are writing in. "This one says, 'They want equal rights? We'll give them equal rights. These macho women have brought this on themselves.' " She pulls out another: " 'Dear Ann, I have come up with a simple solution. Why not let the women sit on the men's laps? This will completely eliminate the seating problem and no doubt bring joy and frivolity all along.' Signed, 'Bus Rider in Florida.' "

The copy of "Miss Lonelyhearts" on the shelf prompts my next question.

Her answer is "You have to insulate yourself against what is coming at you. Otherwise, you go right to pieces. I've had some letters that are very, very sad. And hopeless. 'I'm a twenty-seven-year-old and I've never had a date, and I probably never will, because I've been in a wheelchair for ten years. I just wish that some nice man could see beyond the wheelchair.' What do you tell them? What do you *say* to these people?"

She talks about a trip she made to Vietnam in 1967. She had been getting a lot of letters from the boys. "They were not happy warriors, and I decided to go and visit them in the hospital, and that was a tremendous experience. I would sit on the bed, which you're not supposed to do, and they loved the closeness. They said, 'Boy, I haven't smelled perfume in two years.' And I said, 'You could be dangerous.' You know—just to have a lot of fun with them." She brought back three hundred phone numbers. "Calling them took me three days. I had notes—'Leg gone,' 'Eye out,' 'Gerald Swanson, he lives in Akron, call mother.' I called up these people. 'This is Ann Landers and I'm calling from Chicago and I just got back from Vietnam and I saw George. He's in the hospital. He has a cold, and they didn't want it to get any worse.' " She adds, "A lot of colds. I just was not going to get into any kind of injuries. The telephone conversations I had with these people! I made friends for life."

IT'S getting late—the time of night when you can hear the clocks ticking. She talks about her father's coming over from Vladivostok. We speculate. What if Abe Friedman had stayed in Russia? Assuming he escaped the pogroms, would she still be there, a babushka, shovelling snow and taking in washing for extra cash? She says she regrets never asking her parents about their parents and grandparents—the only regret she has expressed all evening. Suddenly, she blurts, "Who *cares*? It's what you are today that counts, not where you came from."

She says she's been lucky, adding, "I knew what to do with the luck, that's the difference. Some people don't know what to do with it. I recognize an opportunity. But I never envisioned anything as huge as this."

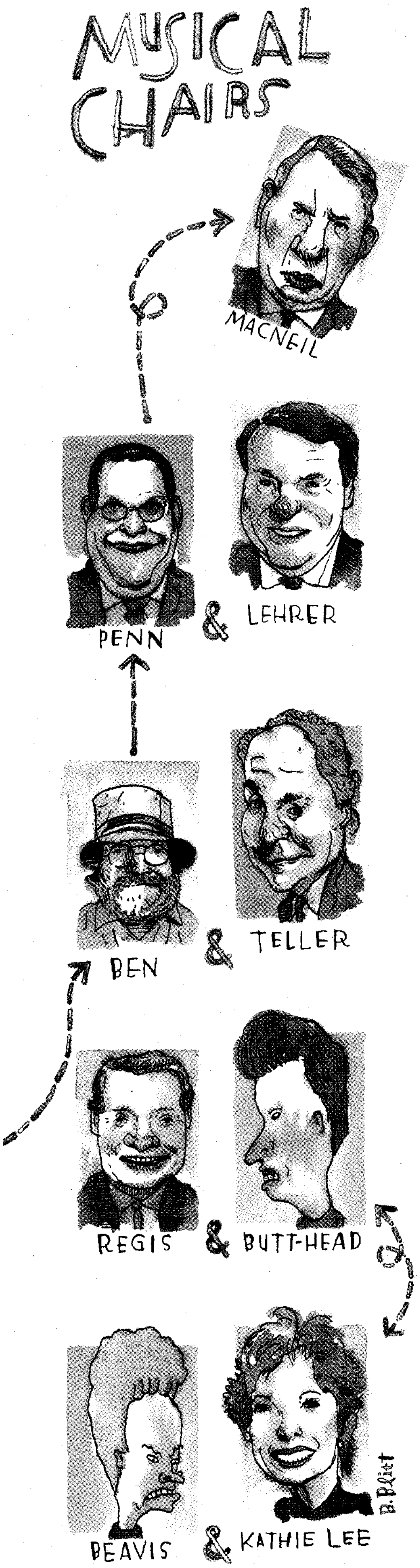
She has no plans to retire. "I plan to die at the typewriter. Just keel over at the machine."

Ann Landers will die with her. "I own the name. There will never be another Ann Landers. When I go, the name goes with me. I've had offers, and I mean in the millions, for that name, and I've absolutely— No way am I going to sell the name. The name is mine and that is me, and when I go the column goes with me."

It's after midnight. I'm tired; she isn't. When I leave, she will deal with "Chivalry" and "North Carolina Judge" and "Jewish" for a couple of hours. She asks the elevator man if the night doorman got the cookies she brought back from dinner for him.

"Yes, Mrs. Lederer."

Riding down, I miss the quiet and the closeness and the smell of perfume. A few days later, there is a message on my machine: "It's Eppie. All I did was talk about me. We didn't get to talk about you." ♦



FICTION

THE ROYAL PALMS

BY MATTHEW KLAM

LAST winter, we went on vacation to the Caribbean. When the plane landed, we were so exhausted we could barely lift our bags. We checked in at the hotel, and got rid of the suitcases, and without unpacking went out the gate to look at the casino. A guard pointed us in the opposite direction from the beach, down a little dirt road, a five-minute walk from the hotel gate.

The casino was a small white stucco building, with bars on the windows and a brown wooden sign. There were some German tourists in there, and I overheard a couple of Americans talking, but the rest of the faces in the room were either friendly employees or locals—whatever, black people, people from there. I played blackjack, and I was on a roll. Winning relaxes me; at some point in the night I was up two thousand dollars. Diane played the slot machines, going all night without a hit, waiting for me to finish. I cashed out because the place was closing. It was just after one in the morning. We were practically the last ones in there, definitely the last white ones in the place. They paid out my winnings and I followed Diane to the door.

I had a buzz on. I put the money in the belly of my shirt, because I couldn't carry it all in my pockets. It was half the cost of the trip, although that wasn't an issue. Two guys came out of the casino behind us, local guys, and we nodded to them and they went to their car. They pulled it around in our direction. Diane looked back and saw the car; she looked at me—there was that funny moment—and then she started running down the road.

The car came up behind us. It took me a second to figure out what was going on. Diane had a ten- or twenty-yard lead on me—she's a fast runner, she was a gymnast in high school—and I started running with all this goddam money bouncing around, but I couldn't keep up. I was telling her to wait for me, and yelling at her not to run, because it would only make things worse, incriminate us or attract their attention, although she did have a point. The car kept slowing down, because the road was in terrible shape. I was running as fast as possible, Diane's white pants disappearing in the dark in front of me, the money bouncing around everywhere in my shirt. Lights from the hotel loomed in front of us now, the car bounding into those barrel-size humps and potholes, its headlights leaping across us and up into the trees. I could hear the thumping of the engine—it was an old Jeep and it sounded like a washing machine—but the noise came both from right behind me and from far away, echoing through the woods. I was chugging now, gaining on Diane. I could see the hotel guard, asleep in his shack.

We got to the gate and the guard sat up. The car pulled up alongside us, and the two guys looked over at us, and we looked at them. The guard had a shotgun. He went and spoke to the driver. Then they turned around and drove away. I had been happy back there at the blackjack table, beating the slit-eyed dealer, but with the sudden heat and the run down the road, the airplane food and the funny smell of this fertile jungle, I wanted to puke.

We were staying in a bungalow beside the main building, one of a row of cottages in the trees along the beach. Diane went into the bathroom without a word. I was so freaked that I didn't know what to do. I didn't want that cash in there with us, so after she went to sleep I walked around back, behind the cabin, and buried the money in the sand. It was dark.

Then I got into bed. I listened to Diane breathe. I couldn't tell if she was asleep or not, and I'd become afraid of that lately, of not knowing—and of how it didn't matter. We hadn't had sex since Thanksgiving. Diane said her ass was too fat. We hadn't enjoyed each other's company now in a long time, and before this trip there were nights when we didn't speak. Earlier that day, standing in line at the airport with all our luggage, she said to me, "I'm fat. I feel ugly."

I said, "We're going on a great vacation, so try to have fun."

She said, "You hate me." I didn't know what to say. I did hate her, partly, she was right, but not for being fat: Diane is small and cute, everything on her is round and full anyway. But I was taking it very seriously that she was repulsed by me, that she stopped me anytime I tried to touch her.

I still felt love for her, too, but we didn't have the same outlook anymore. And I didn't like listening to her complain all the time. My life was going the way I always thought it should—I mean my job, and money. The contracts I'd sold last quarter were huge, my company had just bought a smaller firm and merged, we were booming—and I had nobody to tell that to. Diane's job was a total disappointment, or so she claimed, though she could never be specific. She mentioned getting a master's in something, or learning to make jewelry, but that might be too complicated. At home, she ate frozen Snickers bars in bed. She made Kool-Aid every night and chugged it from the pitcher. I hadn't seen Diane in her underwear in months, or her bare shoulders or her pretty chest, or her pale, round thighs: she said she was flab, pure jello; she said her potbelly hung over the waist of her skirt. At night she'd put on her big yellow sweatshirt that came down to her knees; she'd pull the hood up over her head and tie the string and get into bed and turn off the lights. It got so bad that I couldn't even kiss her—she'd laugh or cover her lips and say, "I have to wax my mustache." We had more money now, and sometimes we discussed doing something new, either kids or a new house; neither one felt like the natural thing, but what were we going to do next? Something was missing. We needed the next phase, and we needed what was missing to get to the next phase. I didn't know whether to be worried or not.

THE next morning I went out to get the money I'd buried in the sand. As I was digging, I saw it all again in my mind, the little jeep turning and then Diane running. Who knows what those guys wanted—they probably thought we were crazy—but it occurred to me then that she'd never looked back. What if I'd tripped? Maybe I missed something, but I felt terrible then, remembering: Diane, running away from me. The money was all wet; I'd packed it in a plastic bag, and a jogger who walked by wondered if it was shellfish I had caught.

I had the hotel clerk change it into big bills and put it in the vault. He assured me that nothing bad had ever happened here, and never would, that I was perfectly safe. The natives were friendly, he said; I should forget it and begin to enjoy myself.

The food area was a vast tented pavilion, with plush, oversized chairs and an enormous breakfast buffet of all different kinds of exotic food. I had the cook make me an omelette. He was dark black, like the guys from the night before. I looked over at Diane, who had a couple of orange slices and a banana on her plate. I said, "Hey, come on, eat something. We're on vacation." She said she didn't want to get too full.

As we walked to the water, I said I liked her new straw hat. She said, "If you stare at my gut I will kill you."

I rubbed some sunscreen on. The beach was totally empty. Where the hell was everybody? "Jesus Christ," I said to Diane, "this is some fucking resort."

At lunch the place was full, though, and then the crowd came to the beach, and later that afternoon there was a softball game and we joined in. I got a hit that went over the shortstop's head. Diane pitched for the other team and did great. That evening we ate pasta and shellfish. They had drummers in the pavilion, but we were too tired to stay for more than a minute, and I slept that night the way you'd hope to sleep on vacation—like a five-year-old kid with no troubles. I dreamed about my base hit and woke up to birds singing outside the window. We had pancakes for breakfast, and later the staff organized a big tug-of-war and a sack race, and we met some more of the other guests. Our team won the sack race but lost the tug-of-war.

WE claimed a spot for ourselves on the beach. Every morning you could find us there. We spent our day swimming, napping, baking in the sun. After a couple of days your eyes don't fight the landscape. The beach was gorgeous; it started at the dock and wound along for half a mile, narrow in some places, funnelling into a rocky point with a jetty. The ocean was blue—deep, brilliant turquoise—except that at noon, with the sun directly overhead, it turned the color of tin. Low tide left lumps of seaweed like piles of old, wet wigs; guys came by with rakes and took them away. On the rim of the beach there were big palm trees to lie under. It was cool in the shade. If you waved to one of the staff guys, he'd bring you a chaise.

We got used to it. I figured out how you adjust your chaise without chopping off a finger. Where to go to eat lunch, which way to the Tiki Bar. I found a shortcut through the pricker bushes to the cottage. It's a resort, so it's yours as much as it is anybody's. You know some other people now, so you say hello. I sat there staring at the water and thought back to my life: breakfast meetings, angry clients, me in a rage at the office, somebody crying, somebody quitting, me driving back home wondering what kind of mood we'll both be in that night—days come in like the surf, and I'm sand, I'm the rocks, and it pounds me.

Diane bought a flowered bikini in the hotel store. She looked fine, but she wrapped a towel around her waist whenever she stood up. Her hair looked shiny in the sun. Her skin was getting darker. Then the sun would go behind a cloud, she'd tuck her hair behind her ear and turn a page, the wind would come up off the ocean—and I'd see her nipples through the fabric of her bathing suit and I'd have to look away. Her body was soft, round peaches. I'd think, Don't rush it. That would be stupid. I wondered what the hell we were going to do.

WE were having lunch one day under the big top, and this couple came up and introduced themselves. Their names were Rick and Joanie. They had just got there the night before, and were staying in the bungalow right next to ours, it turned out. Our table was empty, and we invited them to sit. He was an outdoor-type guy, tall and athletic, with a mustache—he had on a black tank top, with smooth, flat muscles underneath it—and she was tall and fit with sandy blond hair, like him. They were already tan. They hadn't got their plates yet, so we told them what was good on the buffet and what to steer clear of, and what they run out of every day, and like that.

Rick said, "Have you tried the goatfish?" He told us the fish was a delicacy here. When they came back with food, they had some of that fish on their plates, and brought an extra piece for us to try.

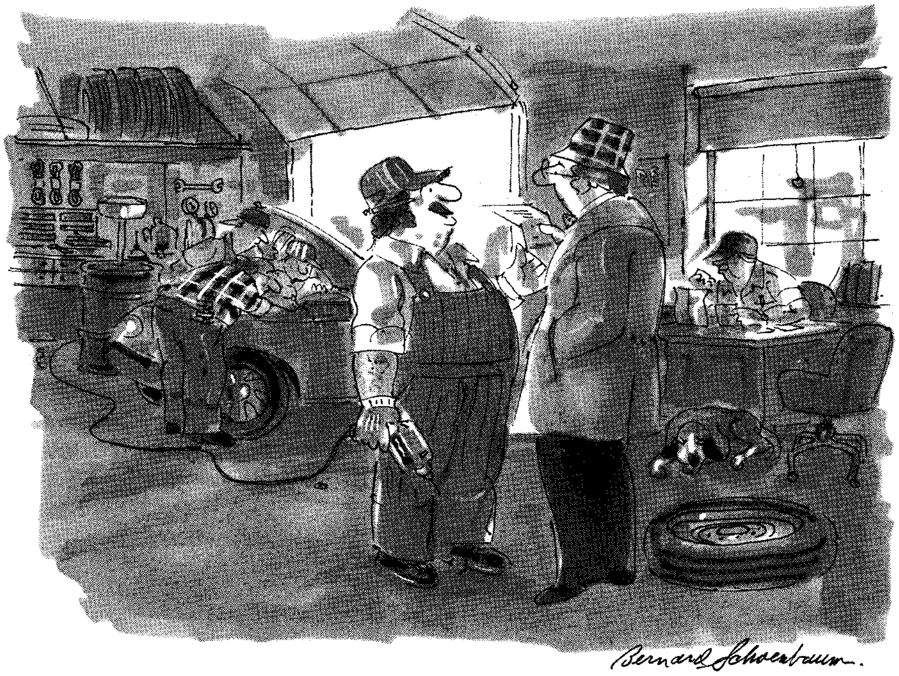
They lived in northern Florida. Joanie was an actress. She said she did a lot of local television commercials. She had huge teeth and a big, wide smile. When we stood up, later, I realized she was about a foot taller than me. Rick sold powerboats; he had two dealerships and a third one on the way. He had broad shoulders and big hands, a thin nose and smooth skin, and a steel diving watch on his left wrist. I'm not that tall, or as good-looking as some guys, but I'm not an ugly fucking freak or anything. These two were perfect, though. They looked like models, big models who lifted weights. They had a boy, five, and a girl, two, and they showed us pictures of them, and Rick had a picture of himself on his Harley, giving the thumbs-up. I said they must still be exhausted from the flight, but Rick pulled his hair back in a rubber band and said he'd already reserved a court for paddle tennis later.

He asked me what I thought of the fish. I said it was good. Rick said they really knew how to cook it here; it tasted like butter.

THE next morning I was walking down the beach and I saw Rick. He said, "Hey, neighbor, where you going?"

I said, "Nowhere," and Rick said, "I'm going fishing. Come on." I'd never been fishing. I ran back to our suite. Diane was taking a nap. I didn't know what to bring. I grabbed my Swiss Army knife and left a note: "Didn't want to wake you up, honey—Rick and I went fishing."

The resort chartered a boat twice a week to take people out, and besides us there were seven or eight other guests on board. It headed toward the horizon, loud and stinking of diesel fuel. Then they shut the engine off and everybody dropped their lines. It was amazing out



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there. Rick fished. I didn’t fish. I watched the other people.

I saw a couple of sailboats and some birds—it was quiet this far from shore—and if you stared over the side into the water you could make out the bottom, thirty or forty feet down. Rick kept taking things out of his pockets: a piece of gum, a chunk of bait, a pill from a bottle of medicine, a visor, a box of Tic-Tacs. He put on sunscreen and smoothed his mustache. Then his rod snagged—it was so bent I thought he would snap it—and he pulled a fish right out of the water, a beautiful, flat, wide fish, shimmering aquamarine color. It had incredible skin. He held it up; it was flipping around like crazy. I’d never seen a fish like that. I wasn’t sure if he wanted to keep it or throw it back, but he laid it on the deck and stepped on it and stuck a knife into its head. Then he threw it in a Ziploc bag.

“That, right there,” he said, “is good eating.” I watched as the interior of the bag fogged over with moisture. I think the fish was still moving.

I said, “Is it dead?”

He said, “What do you mean?”

“Would you kill it, please?”

He said, “It’s dead.”

“Is that goatfish?”

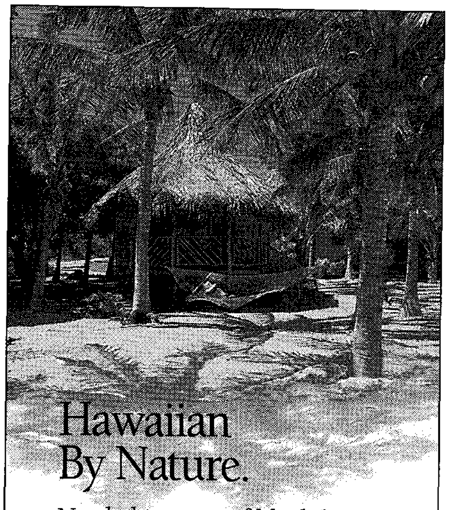
“That? No.”

We had beers from a cooler and watched the other people fish. There was a woman across from us wearing a thing like a black slip and drinking a Coke. Rick said, “Look at her. She’s incredible. My dick’s been hard the whole day.”

She looked like “Breakfast at Tiffany’s”—that actress with the skinny neck. I smiled at her. She smiled back. “Guess what,” Rick said. “She wants to fuck you.” They started the engine again, and we cruised along the water, spray coming over the side and hitting us. He kept staring at the woman. She flipped her long black hair, talking with the captain, and turned her beautiful ass in our direction. She was small and had a little waist and tan shoulders. Her legs were perfect. He said, “What I’d do to get my rocket off in her.” The boat was turning around then. We headed back.

They let us out at the dock, a little way from the buildings and the people lying out on the sand. We came walking up the beach with Rick’s fish, and Rick went someplace to clean it. The women, Joanie and Diane, were lying side by side.

“Look at this,” Diane said, and sat up to show me the back of her head. “Joanie did this to my hair.” It was all braided in teeny rows. She was excited.



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"That's great, honey," I said. "Thanks, Joanie."

She said, "No problem." She was propped up on her elbow, with her free hand covering her eyes like a visor. She squinted into the sun, smiling hopefully.

"Here," I said, and tossed her my baseball hat.

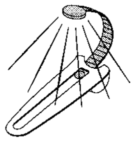
"Thanks," she said, and pulled it down and swung her ponytail out the back. I looked at Diane—her mouth was hanging open in surprise. Did she want my hat for herself? I guess so.

She slid down to wipe the sand off her feet, and I knelt beside her and kissed her. I took her hand and held it. I ducked down and kissed her neck. She giggled and said to Joan, "Maybe I should get my ears pierced." Joanie was staring down the beach looking for her husband. She was already very tan, and had a great body—a taut, swimmer's body, trim and lanky; she had beautiful bosoms, and her hip bones jutted up so nicely you could've hung Christmas ornaments on them. I kissed Diane's throat, and held her little braids in my hand. She jerked her head away. "My hair's filthy," she said. Joan looked down the blanket at us, over the delicate arch of her pelvis, and smiled.

THE four of us sat together at dinner that night, and drank wine. I ate this fish stew in a flaky pie crust, and after dinner the staff built a bonfire on the beach and we took another bottle of wine and went down there.

They'd dragged big logs over for us to sit on, and I sat down next to the guy stoking the fire. It was chilly out. The fire was heating up one side of my face, making it swell, and the sea breeze hit me on the other side and it felt numb. The local guys were talking to each other a mile a minute—it was totally unintelligible—and across the circle I saw Diane chatting with a couple we'd met on the airport van.

Our vacation was half over. On the whole, things were better. Was that what Diane thought, too? Or had she stopped loving me, and couldn't say so? I kept wondering if this was the end. I was sitting in a jolly crowd of people. I sipped my wine. Rick was standing over on the side, talking with the woman from the boat; he opened her beer for her with a thing on his key chain and took a swig. The girl laughed. Joanie was two feet



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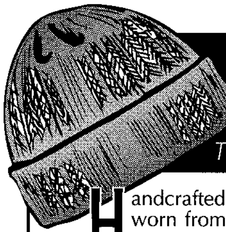

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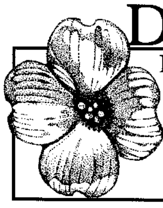

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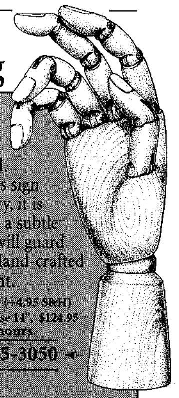

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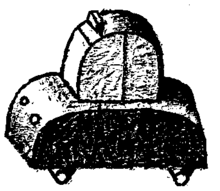
away from them. She still had that dopey smile plastered on her face. She sat Indian style on the sand, looking tan and tired, watching the fire.

After a minute, Rick sat down. He was wearing white tennis shorts and a flannel shirt with the sleeves ripped off and I thought, What kind of guy brings a ripped shirt with him on vacation? It was cold out, and everybody else was wearing jackets. He didn't seem cold. The fire glowed in his golden hair. He had dimples next to his mouth, and he wore his hair long and curly. He moved down the log right next to me. He was tan as hell, his arm muscles were like knotted brown wood. Rick had the looks—handsome and strong and cool at the same time, that was him. Like those guys you knew in high school who had it all. He probably used to drive a Camaro with a surfboard on it.



On the other side of the circle there were two hotel guys playing guitars. They weren't good or terrible, but one guy had a nice voice. Rick asked me how everything was; we talked about home, how it seemed like a million miles away. I started to tell him about my problems, my rotten sex life with Diane. I don't know why—people do funny things on vacation.

He listened, staring into the fire. I tried to keep the descriptions as vague as possible, and then I thought, fuck it—some stupid boat dealer from the Everglades who I'm never gonna see again, so what if he knows my wife has a mustache? He said he understood. He was, it turned out, totally cool. We talked about how married people get along together. He rubbed his chin. "That's all normal," he said. "You have to work around it."

So, as Diane and I walked back to our suite, I grabbed some matches and asked for a candle from the front desk. Following Rick's advice, I gave Diane a neck rub, and put some warm water in a bowl and got a washcloth. I washed her neck and shoulders with the cloth. She asked me what I was doing, and I told her to be quiet. I washed her hands and her fingers; I untied her sandals and washed the tops of her feet. She said, "That feels good." I put some lotion on her elbows. She let me undress her. I took her shirt off, and her bra; I undid her shorts and pulled them off. She lay down and smiled, and I took the cloth and rubbed it in slow circles over her entire body.

I loved her, I still knew that. This was my princess here. We weren't going to die from this. I sat beside her, and we talked about the trip so far, the dinners, the bonfire, those guys in the jeep who were trying to kill us. She'd signed up for a windsurfing lesson for later in the week and was all excited about going. I put some moisturizer on her shoulders, and brushed her hair, and then I took all my clothes off and lay there next to her. We seemed happy. She was cute as hell. In the past four days, the sun had made her hair lighter. Her arms and legs were dark, her tummy was a lighter shade of tan; where the bikini had been was pure white. I mentioned a few things about life at home, how we needed to make some changes, to plan for the future. Diane had her arm under her head, and every few minutes she shut her eyes. Her eyelids were almost white against her tan face. When I asked her if she was sleepy she said no. We stayed like that for a while.

It reminded me of a scene out of high school—the candle on the table, both of us buzzed on wine, my dick wanging around between us. I looked down the length of her body, and put my hand on her. She didn't move. I was thinking the way I had in high school, too—like I would do anything just to touch her. She yawned. I pictured doing it to her even if she passed out. Diane said, "Excuse me." I was dying to fuck my wife. I was sizzling. As soon as I tried something—I moved myself against her, and put my lips on her neck—she jumped back and a look crossed her face; she said my beard was scratchy. And then she started talking a mile a minute about the woman in the cabin next to Joan's who'd seen an iguana, how it ran across her foot and disappeared into the woods, and we lay there, nobody saying a word now. In a few more minutes, I heard her breathing change. The candle was still going, flickering alongside us. She'd fallen asleep.

THE next day, as we were eating our jambalaya for lunch, they came by. Joanie asked Diane if she wanted to go shopping. Diane said yes, and Rick said he'd rented mountain bikes and heard of some trails that went up into the hills, if I was interested. I didn't feel like it, and

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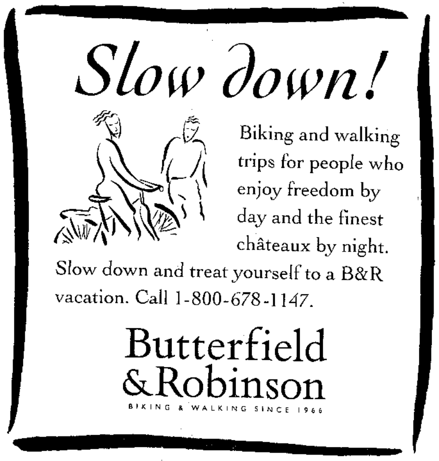
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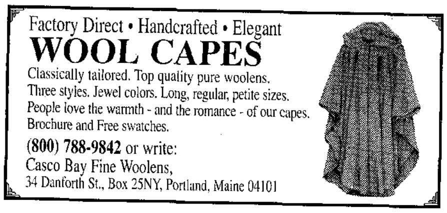
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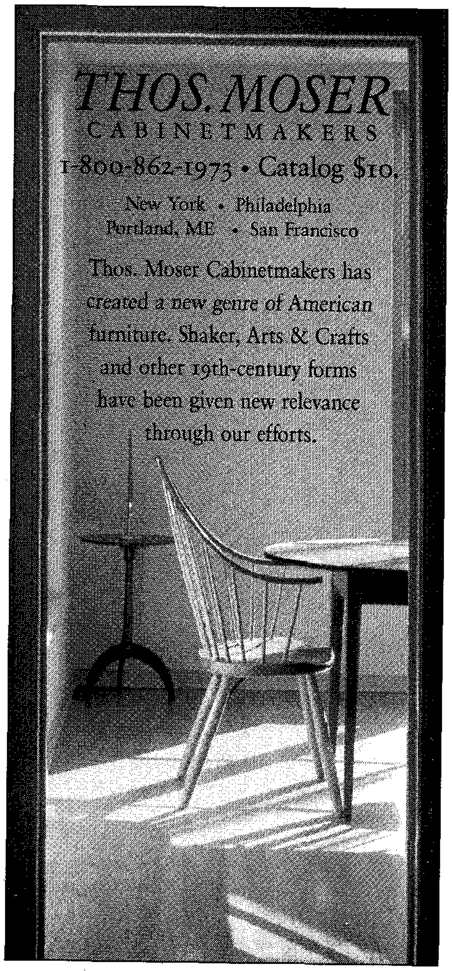
with everybody gone I went into our room and called my office. I turned on my computer and faxed them some stuff, and spent an hour on the phone with our comptroller—we'd had a scare with a big supplier, but *it* was O.K. now. I returned some other calls. Everything was fine. At four o'clock, I looked up. The day was ending. There were three days left of our vacation, it had flown by, and what the fuck was I doing crapping around inside?

I walked toward the hotel's plaza, feeling pale and tired. My hands were sweaty. I hated myself for missing the sun, and now the ocean was calm, and the breeze had died. Salt covered everything—stones, leaves, the spotlights sticking up every five feet in the ground. I walked back and forth between the tennis courts and the place where we usually sat on the beach. There were some European-looking dudes in our spot, wearing little Speedos; I felt like walking up to them and kicking in their skulls. I didn't see anyone I knew, as if a whole crew of fresh guests, all ghostly white and uncomfortable, had come in the night before and replaced the old ones. A woman stood next to me with her baby, changing its diaper in the middle of the plaza, stinking up the joint with her kid's smelly dump. When I finally saw a familiar face go by—the kitchen-staff guy who made my omelettes—I was so relieved I almost hugged him. He was carrying a three-foot-long fish—a tuna, he said, seventy pounds; it had just come off a boat. I followed him to an outdoor kitchen, and while he cut it up I asked him about growing up on the island.

A little later I was sitting in the hotel lobby, reading the newspaper, when Rick came in with his bicycle. He had on tight black bicycle-rider pants, and his thick, muscular legs were all tan and defined, with big veins on his calves. He said the ride had been great, and showed me on a map where he'd gone. Then he pulled me up by the arm with his iron grip and yanked off his sunglasses—he had a raccoon stripe of white where the glasses had been. Talking low, he told me there were guys out there living forty feet up in the trees, pot growers with machine guns who almost shot him but then took him in and befriended him. He said they were the nicest guys, and he talked with them and smoked pot and sang reggae. They gave him a tour of their jungle hide-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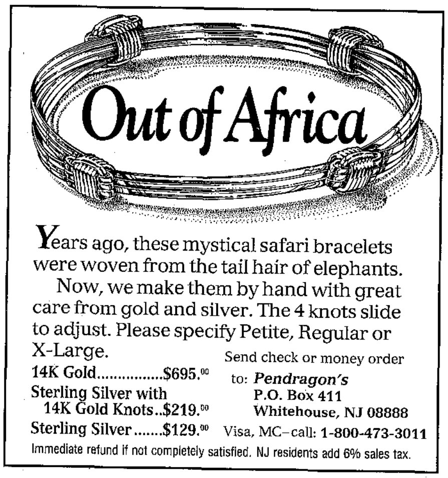
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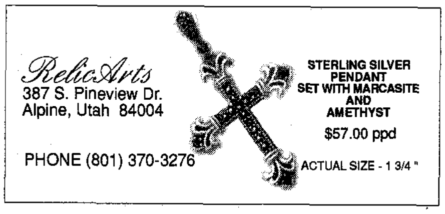
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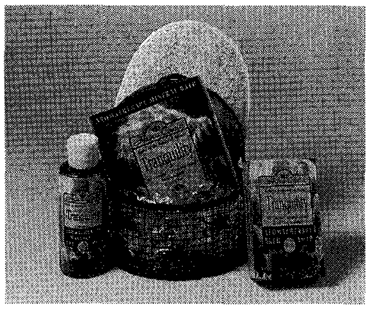

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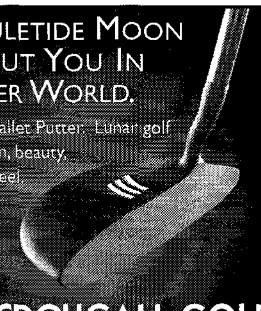

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out. They'd made crude musical instruments out of tin boxes and wire, and they had their feet propped up on crates of ammo. He said, "One of them went to Oxford."

I said, "Great."

He said, "They ship the pot out in these carved heads, the dark wood carving this area is known for, called *obiko*. Joanie was supposed to buy one when she went into town today. They stuff the shit into a hollowed-out part of the heads and ship them around the world."

I said, "Is that so?"

Rick said, "Listen, come back up with me tomorrow. You can't believe the view."

I said, "Not in a million years."

"I'm taking Joanie," he said.

"You're not taking Joanie up there. They'll gang-rape her."

"They're the friendliest people in the world. They gave me dope. They had piles of it lying around." He started to reach into his bicycle pants, in the middle of the lobby. He said, "I got it here somewhere."

"Rick—what the fuck are you doing?" I said, and grabbed his hand.

He said, "Possession of marijuana is not a crime here. And even if it is, they want the tourists to smoke it."

DIANE asked Rick to tell the whole story again at dinner. I was sick of it and said nothing. I was going gambling again at that little shack. It was "casino night," whatever that meant. Rick came with me. I agreed on the condition that he leave his wacky weed at home. Diane stayed with Joanie. There was a lounge singer in the night club, and they went to see his act.

The casino was busier that night. There were lines for the slot machines and a crowd at every table. I played blackjack. I ate about a thousand pounds of salty cashews, and didn't drink. Rick stood next to me, and after an hour a seat opened up at the table and he decided to play.

"I'll be your wingman," he said, stacking his chips in ten-dollar piles.

Blackjack is pretty simple: you need some luck, you need to be able to add up to twenty-one, and like that. I've seen all kinds of systems, basic card counting, charts guys carry with statistical analysis; I've seen guys with backers—professionals—and I've seen people asked to leave casinos for various offenses. Rick bet erratically, in no particular pattern; I couldn't tell if he had any experience at all, and I watched him rip through his bank and go back to the cashier for more chips. He talked to himself and filled up on vodka, and when his bank was gone he went back another time. I couldn't bear to look. He bummed a cigarette off somebody, and mentioned going waterskiing in the morning, and told me how he gave up smoking, cold turkey, on New Year's Day. "This is my first puff in a month," he said.

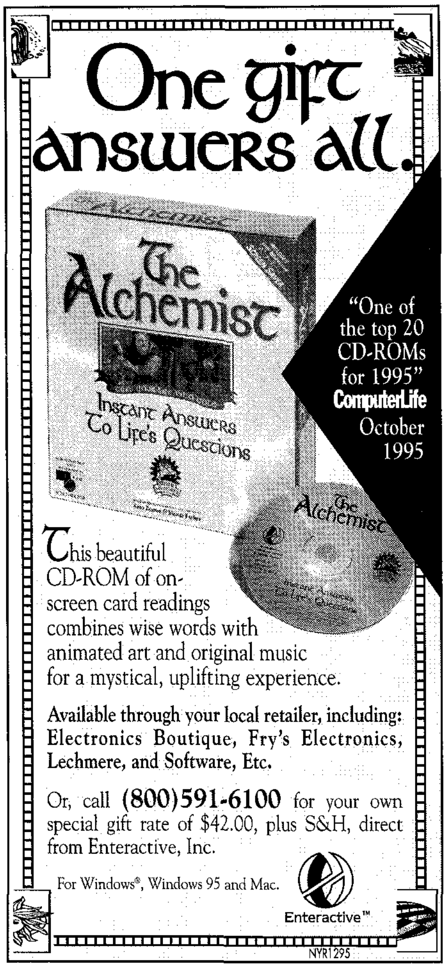
I said, "If you get rid of that hand, you might not lose as fast." He ignored me.

Meanwhile, I did well. I'm good at math, and blackjack is a lot of math. At one point, the dealer aimed his finger at me and said, "You're tough," and I shrugged. I felt like David Hasselhoff. I pointed back at him, and then didn't say a word except when I needed a card. Rick was out, he'd played like an imbecile, and he stayed to watch me, hunched over in his skintight rugby shirt.

I took a card. The dealer split a pair of eights. I watched all the stupid people around me losing money, and a little later a new dealer took over, and I cashed in almost nine hundred bucks. I won, and the house lost. As we walked back to the hotel—it wasn't even midnight, and it was cool and breezy like every other night since I'd arrived—Rick asked me to give him his money back. It was five hundred dollars. He said, "Please, buddy." I tried to tell him that the money he lost was no longer his money—it was the bank's—and what I had was different money, not his. He started explaining: he said he'd been drunk, the rules were different here from the ones in the casino he played in, whatever. I said to him, "Why don't you go for a swim?" He said no. He begged me. I started laughing and pretended to play the violin. He told me Joanie had refused to let him take money for gambling, but he'd taken it anyway, and now he'd blown it, and he needed the money before we got back or she'd kill him. I said no. He asked me one more time. "What do I look like?" I said. "Get an advance on your credit card."

We got to Rick and Joanie's cabin. I could hear the women inside. I said to him, "Next time you gamble you need to have a figure in your head, a top amount you can lose," but he told me to shut up. Then he opened the door, and we went inside.

The women said the lounge singer was great, and started dancing around the bed. Diane had ordered two pizzas from room service, and there was food all over the place. Rick sat in a chair in the corner with his hat on backward. He looked fried, as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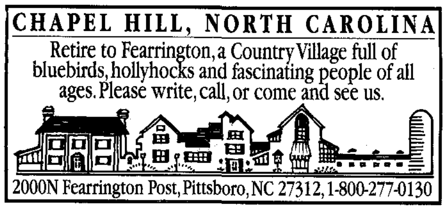
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if he got a sunburn on the bike that day. Diane and I went to our room.

We were in bed with the lights off when Rick knocked at the door. I went outside and stood on the paved path with him. The moon was shining on the water. He'd been crying. I could see where the discussion was about to go. He wore wrinkled blue boxers and white socks. He'd taken his hat off, and I noticed he had hives on his forehead, probably from riding his bike through the jungle.

He said he felt like crap inside. He said he loved me, he told me he was so surprised to find a friend at one of these places that he couldn't believe his luck. "You know what I mean?" he said. I saw that the light was on in their room, which meant Joanie probably knew he'd lost the money. He was talking about the fish we'd caught together. "There's nothing like fishing with your friend," he said. His oratory didn't seem to be rounding any corner. There were so many different stupid things about this moment, now he was telling me how he got ripped off buying some Krugerrands, I wanted him to shut the fuck up, I didn't know what to do, I went back into my bungalow and got five hundred dollars from the night's winnings and handed it to him. I said, "Here."

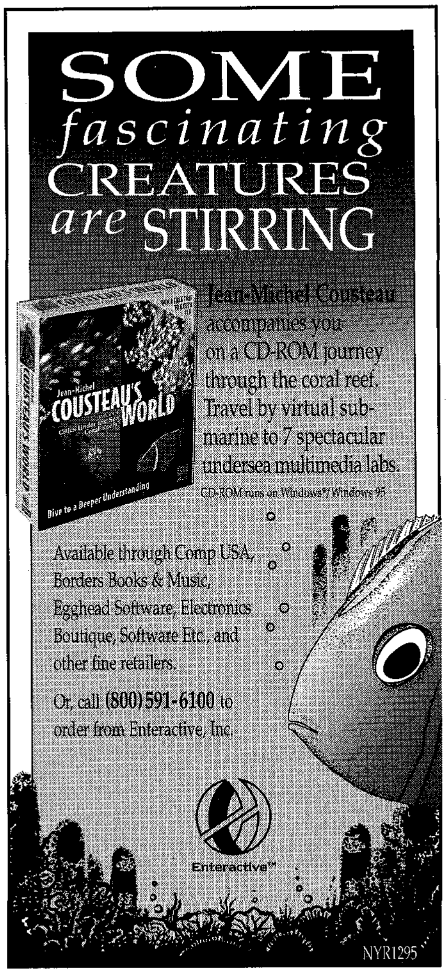
He said, "Thank you."

I didn't answer him. I thought he was full of shit.

He went back in and shut the door. I stood there, outside my doorway, furious at myself. His light went off. I distinctly heard him say something to Joanie. I waited another minute. I didn't hear anything else.

My watch said 2 A.M. A mosquito came up and bit my eyelid, but I didn't feel like going inside yet. I was sweating. Right next door, if I needed them, were my new friend Rick and his piece-of-ass wife. And in my bungalow I had my own no-fuck, don't-touch wife sleeping off her pizza pies. I had a view of the ocean, the seaborne air, mountains in back of me, jungles full of tree-climbing pot freaks. In the moonlight, there were swans or storks, maybe pelicans, gliding above the calm sea, looking for a fish to spear.

THE next day was perfect, like all the others. Diane and I swam and read our books and lay on the beach. Joanie appeared at lunch and joined us; she looked tired, and the three of us said almost nothing as we ate. I asked about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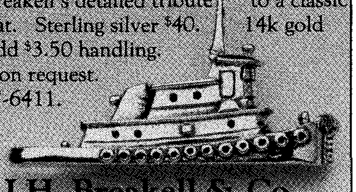

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Rick, and she shrugged, and from then on we baked in the sun, watching the water. Joanie told us she'd talked to her kids that morning; their grandpa had made them spaghetti sandwiches, and they loved it. We swam, and later Joanie said Rick was probably playing tennis, and at dinner, when we still didn't see him, she said he was exhausted and had never woken up from his nap.

We said good night and went to bed. This time it was Diane who started up. She kissed me and I kissed her back. I held her tits. She opened my shorts and massaged me with a feathery touch of her fingertips, kind of teasing.

It went on for, I don't know, a while. There was all this circling, circling—had she forgotten how to do everything? She was doing a terrible job. I couldn't stand it anymore, I shoved her out of the way and started rubbing myself. It was not a good scene—not loving, if you know what I mean, not the expression of the subtle union between two people. And then Diane started to cry. She said she felt like a failure in every way—I was ready to agree—and then she went the other way and said I didn't know her anymore, that I'd forgotten how it used to be when we were crazy about each other, that now I didn't give a fuck about anything but making money. She cried and I held her. I regretted whacking off like that, I admitted it made everything worse. But I didn't really care. Without any more fighting, we both fell asleep.

FIRST thing Friday morning, Diane went off to that windsurfing lesson in the bay. Joanie and I sat on the beach and talked. There was still no sign of Rick.

I told her about my business. She said it sounded fascinating. She told me there was a soap opera based in Miami that she was thinking of trying out for. We went swimming. I blew bubbles out my nose, and it cracked her up. Breakfast ended at eleven, and neither of us did anything about it. Eventually I got up and bought us apples at the commissary.

Rick showed up around noon, all sweaty in a tennis outfit and a purple baseball hat with the name of the resort stitched across it. I'd actually missed having him around. Rick's eyes were so green they almost glowed, from all that time in the sun. He was grinning again. Joanie asked if he was hungry; he said no. He had a white plastic bucket and a fishing rod; he went over near the dock and began surfcasting.

Joanie was looking at me. I didn't know what she meant. I said, "What are you smiling for?"

She said, "I'm such a fucking idiot."

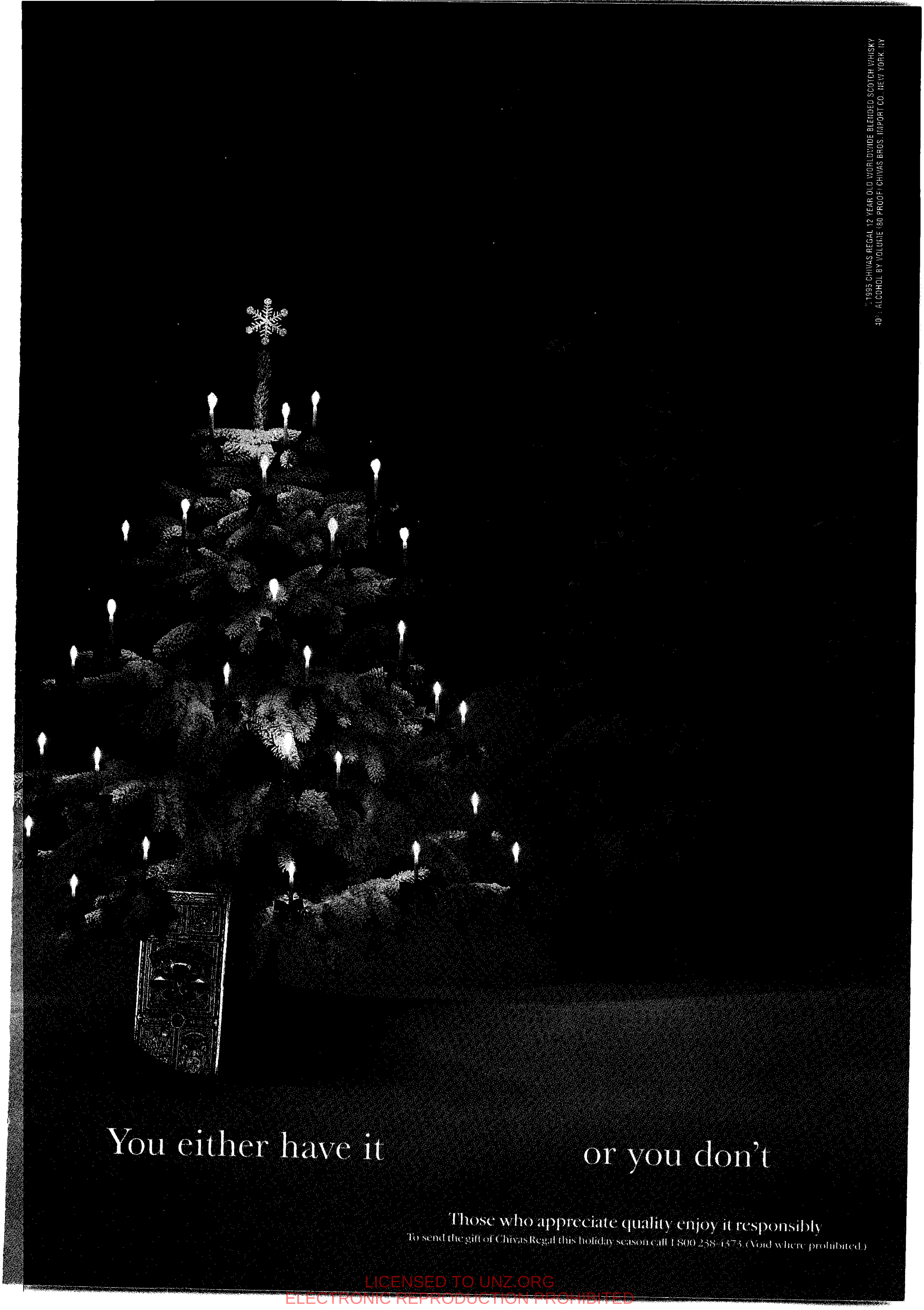
Diane came back. She was all excited. She sat in the sand and told us how she got the Windsurfer going—it was tricky—and how the instructor, Philippe, and she and two others went way out into the ocean. She said she'd never had so much fun in her life. The group had had to turn back because the weather was starting to change, but not before they spotted a giant sea turtle, swimming alongside them. She said, "It was huge and gray—it had slimy bumps on its back." I looked off to the horizon, but I couldn't see anything, just a few clouds in a long line above the water.

Diane jumped up to go say hello to Rick over by the dock. They started chatting, and soon she was holding the rod and Rick was leaning around her, showing her how to draw it back with his long, bronze muscles. Rick was tall and broad-shouldered, and Diane was looking up at him. You could hear them laugh. Joanie sat beside me, blinking into the hazy sun, her lips coated in a thick film of sunblock. After a few minutes, I laid my head down, and when I looked up Diane and Rick were gone. I took my shirt off and fell asleep.

I woke up to the wind kicking sand, just the way Philippe had said. My mouth was dry. The sun was gone.

The beach was empty. I sat up, my face mashed into wrinkles from the towel. Joanie had passed out, too, curled up beside me in her bikini bottoms and my gray T-shirt. I sat back and looked at her small pink feet, the calluses on her heels and toes, her smooth, hairless thighs, the faint hint of veins beneath the skin. The stretched back of her red bikini bottoms across her dynamite ass. It was so pretty I wanted to cry. She yawned, reaching her long, thin arms up, and I saw her bikini top lying next to her on the towel.

Joanie sat up on her knees, beside me. "Where did they go?" she said. I didn't know. She'd knotted my shirt so it rode



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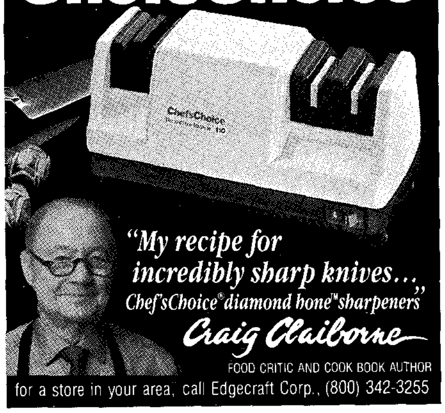

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high up on her rib cage. I reached across and pulled the knot. She watched me. My hand slipped underneath the T-shirt, and I felt my palm across her stomach. There was sand stuck on her leg, and I watched her braless boobs moving against the inside of my shirt. I saw her swallow. I felt her breathe.

Diane came walking up the beach from the direction of the jetty. She said she was tired, and did I want to come take a nap with her. A second later, we were walking down the beach to our room. Joanie didn't have time to respond.

Diane closed the blinds. I sat down and untied my sneakers. She stepped between my legs and put her tongue against my teeth. She knelt, and yanked off my bathing suit and flung it on the lampshade. I was so excited I started to shake. I sat back on the bed, flustered. She took off her bottoms, standing in front of me, and kissed my throat. I kept looking for marks on her from Rick—a sign of use on my wife's body—but I was so turned on after all this time that I was seeing spots. The place where her bikini had been was glowing. She held my head. I rubbed my face against her stomach.

We lay down and started to do it. She seemed fine, I guess. She was digging it. It was the same old Diane. I held her sweet face. She said, "It's nice to see you smile again." Finally, we were grooving.

When it was over, I went into the bathroom and got a glass of water. My groin was raw. She lay on her stomach, breathing.

I sat beside her and rubbed my hand across the top of her ass, as fine as silk.

She said, "I can't move."

"So don't."

"You're the best lover in the world," she said, and turned over and held me. "I promised Rick I'd go fishing, on that boat you guys went on." She looked at me. "Is it all right if I try it? It's our last day."

I said, "Absolutely." She squeezed my body. I hugged her back, as hard as she was hugging me.

"You feel so good," she said, and I said, "Um-hmm." The next second she was standing on one leg, trying to get into her panties. She said, "Thank you."

"For what?"

"For being so wonderful to me."

"No problem," I said. She ran around the room, looking for clothes. She took my baseball hat and fitted it on her head. I was still in bed. She leaned down next to me.

"You're the perfect husband." She gave me a kiss, pulling my lips with her teeth.

"O.K.," I said. She took the camera and flew out the door.

It was four o'clock. I was on my own. I thought of going back to find Joanie on the beach. I flipped open my briefcase, and then shut it, and got up and showered and left the bungalow.

I stopped by the Tiki Bar for a last drink. Jimmy, the bartender, was there, washing the bar off with a hose. The woman from the boat came, and we said hello. I hadn't seen her since the bonfire that night.

She was wearing a bikini, and wore a little leather belly bag clipped around her waist. She wiggled her ass onto the next barstool and lit a smoke and said, "Jim, what do I want?" He shovelled ice into the sink, waiting for her to answer. She said, "Rum-and-Coke, my favorite."

"I'm going back to Baltimore on Sunday. I miss my cats," she told me. She'd been here at least a week. She said, "They bill this place as a singles' resort, but I didn't see any singles here. Just me. And a couple of Swedish guys in G-strings."

I said, "How many cats?"

"Two. They're probably dead by now. My sister's been feeding them."

I was thinking about Diane. The perfume smell of her hair, the velvet softness of her baby skin. We got so close. She was floating all around me.

"I bet they're O.K.," I said. "Don't get depressed."

"I'm sick of this Tiki Bar," the woman said. I thought about Diane and Rick—what was she doing? I pictured them fishing and talking and doing whatever else you do on a boat. Diane and I were in some new place together, and I thought of how it had to keep being new, or else we were doomed. More people came. Here I was, sitting around, depressed. That's because you are a loser, I said to myself. I sipped my daiquiri. It tasted like ice cream. The woman from Baltimore was staring at me. She tapped her cigarette, waiting for me to say something else. I had nothing to say. I stared out at the water as the time passed in long sips. Out beyond the beach, I saw the cruiser pulling back into the harbor.

I said, "Hey—you like lawyers?" She

asked why. "My cousin Walt is a lawyer. He's good-looking. He lives in Baltimore."

She said, "Really?"

"He has his own firm. He's loaded."

"Wow."

Walt had a lisp. He talked like Popeye. But he also had muscles and owned a house on two acres in the suburbs.

"Walt's a great guy," I said. "He'd love you." She smiled and put out her cigarette. "I'll call him when we get back."

She gave me a business card from her belly bag. "Something to look forward to," she said.

Diane and Rick came back. They'd seen dolphins, they said. Diane looked beautiful. I wanted to hold her and touch her again. Rick had caught three fish. He was carrying them in a little cooler filled with ice. The long one he called a "dagger fish." He didn't know its real name. His jaw was cocked in a big smile. I stared at his straw-colored curls.

Diane sure seemed happy now. What had happened? I didn't have a clue. I thought of all the different combinations. I didn't panic—why the fuck should you panic? While I'm thinking this, though, Rick winked at the barstool next to me, at the woman, and she smiled and blushed. Diane looked at me and I looked at her and Rick. I still don't know what was going on. He showed me the other two fish; he wanted to take them home in dry ice and smoke them, and send them to me in the mail. I said, "I do not accept dead fish in the mail," and finished my drink. Diane came over and grabbed me. I put my arm around her and held her tight. The cook ended up broiling the fish for dinner. Rick bought all the wine.

"Here's to us," he said, "and fuck the mortgage." He was all smiles, and our happiness continued. Later in the evening, I found out they were a lot more than that five hundred dollars behind; they had debts at home, too. It was painful. Probably all he needed to avert disaster was some sane advice, a speck of financial insight. I could give him that. I told him to call me before he made any God-awful decisions.

We drank and ate till midnight, and went swimming naked while the ladies crawled around looking for shells by the light of the moon. The next morning, we rode with them to the airport, through that beautiful countryside. I was looking at everything, and it was so nice, because we were leaving. ♦

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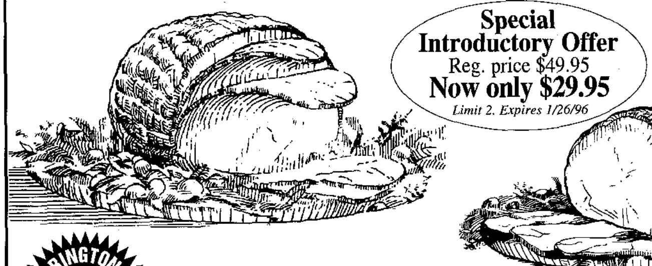

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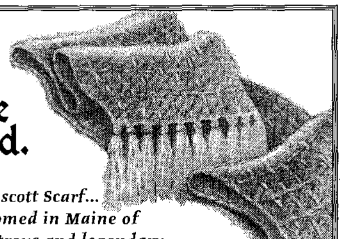

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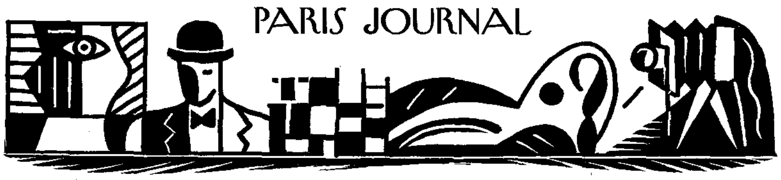


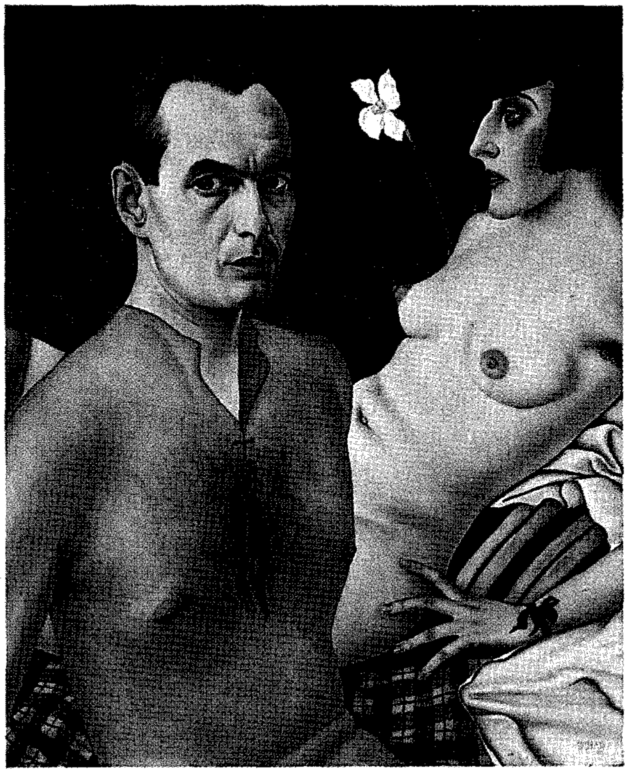
BASIC INSTINCT

Why are the French importing sex?

BY ADAM GOPNIK

FOR a long time, people came to Paris mostly for the sex. "City of the Naughty Spree," Auden wrote disdainfully of Paris in the twenties. "La Vie Parisienne, Les Folies-Bergères, Mademoiselle Fifi, bedroom mirrors and bidets, lingerie and adultery, the sniggers of schoolboys and grubby old men." (Then he went to Berlin, for another kind of spree.) These days, the city's reputation for naughtiness has pretty much diminished. Now the dirty movies get made in Amsterdam; the dirty drawings get sent in from Tokyo; and Asian, or German, towns are where you go for sexual experiment. (Even the bidets are disappearing, having been replaced by bizarre plug-in electric toilets that roar as they chew up human waste, in a frenzy of sanitary appetite, and then send it out, chastened, down the ordinary water pipes.)

France is even running a bimbo deficit, and has to import its sex objects. Not long ago, Sharon Stone flew to Paris to be made a Chevalier of Arts and Letters by the French Minister of Culture, Philippe Douste-Blazy. ("It was natural that France, country of the sans-culottes, would one day honor Sharon Stone," an observer pointed out dryly in one of the papers. "How could we rest with folded arms after she had unfolded her legs?") The Chevalier, though it looks like a medal, with a nifty ribbon and a cool golden star, is actually a slightly Mickey Mouse decoration, designed as a gewgaw for foreigners. (It is not nearly as serious an award as the Légion d' Honneur, discreetly signalled by a red thread.) Still, Sharon was photographed wearing her decoration all over town: at Maxim's, the Embassy, the Flea Market.

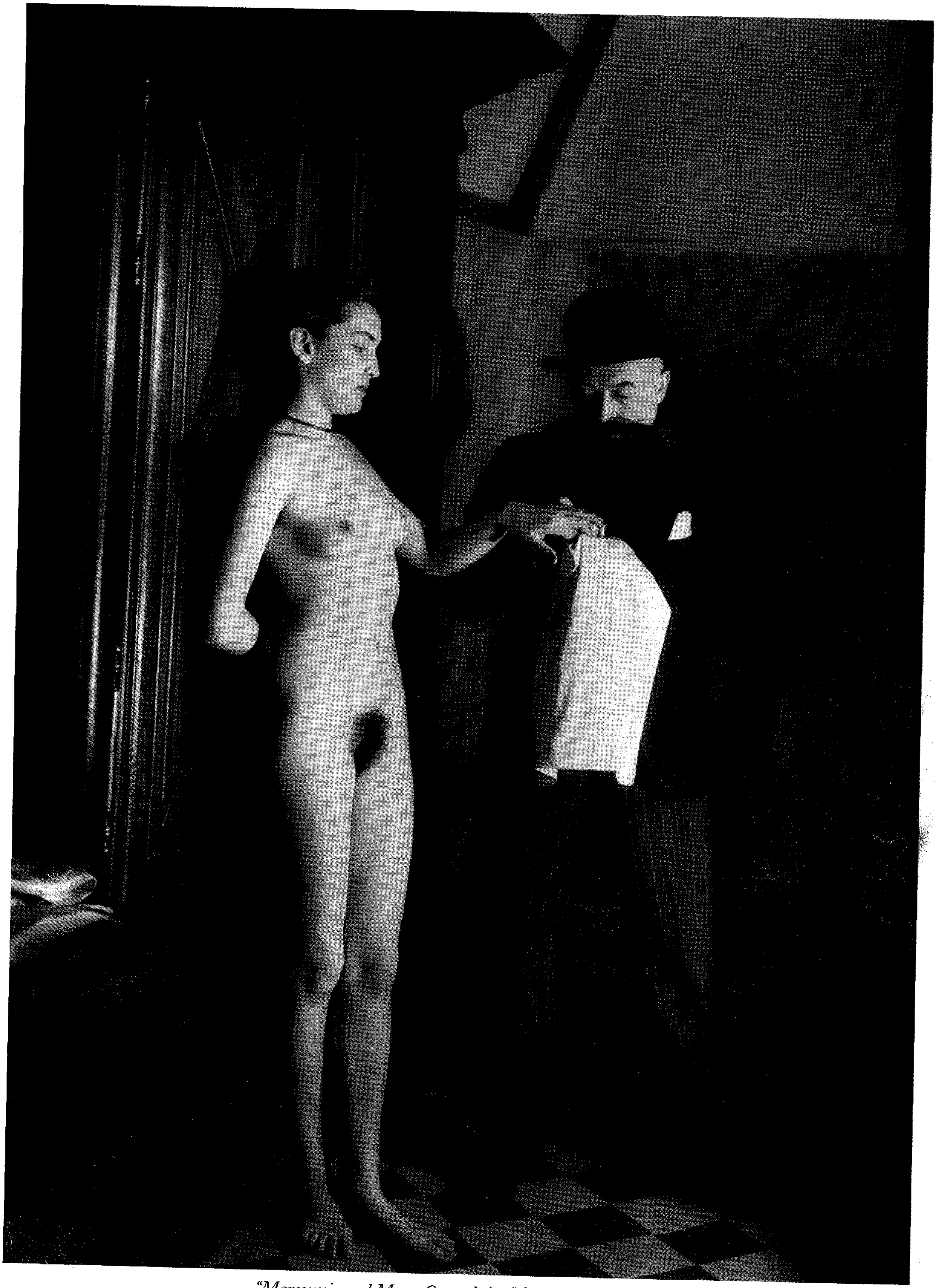


From "Fémininmasculin: The Sex of Art," at the Pompidou Center: "Self-Portrait with Model," by Christian Schad, 1927.

The award struck many Parisians as ridiculous, but it was really a logical part of a consistent cultural policy. The French, despite their reputation, are not cultural chauvinists: they know as well as anyone how bad a lot of their pictures and poems and movies have become. But they remain chauvinists about their judgment. Increasingly, their judgment is all the culture they have. The French want to be free to continue to reinvent American culture in their own image, finding art forms where we saw only hackwork, and actresses where we saw only starlets. (The award to Sharon Stone was for "the totality of her œuvre.") They don't mind if the Americans make the movies, as long as they get to pass out the medals. Pinning a decoration on Sharon Stone is the perfect demonstration of this—a way of looking down your nose at United States cultural imperialism while simultaneously fondling its chest.

THE vast, overwhelming hit show of the season at the Pompidou Center takes sex as its subject and shows the same cultural process at work that got Sharon her medal: France accepting the artistic lead of America, as long as America continues to look to France for glamorous vindication. The show is called "Fémininmasculin: The Sex of Art." To say that it has an indiscriminate principle of selection is to imply that it has a principle of selection. If you are a twentieth-century artist, and if at any point in your career you made a tall, curvy, upthrusting thing or, alternatively, painted an oval, slitted, pushed-back thing, you're in. The sheer number of works blunts the effect of any single one. The curious thing is that the curators seem to have wanted the blunting to take place. The show begins with Courbet's 1866 "The Origin of the World," a study of a woman with her legs spread. (Though it was meant as the final realist statement, its painterly emphasis, in a sweetly Courbet way, is on the model's extremely chubby inner thighs, rather than on her vagina.) This, one of the great no-bullshit statements of modern art, is surrounded not by other examples of sexual realism but by various obscure metaphors: a golden herm, by James Lee Byars; a cloven rock with an oval slit inscribed in it, by Anish Kapoor; three sub-Surrealist Artaud drawings from the forties. All these objects look out toward Duchamp's urinal and bottle rack, which are presented, rather trustingly, as sexual metaphors so obvious that they demand no explication. The ostensible purpose is to allow the consequences of Courbet's gesture to be seen as they expand; the actual effect is to soften Courbet's literalism by placing it in the cozier realm of metaphor.

Next, there are Twombly's graffiti-scrawled dicks and De Kooning's smeared-semen paintings and Picasso's phallus



"Marcoussis and Meret Oppenheim," by Man Ray, 1933.

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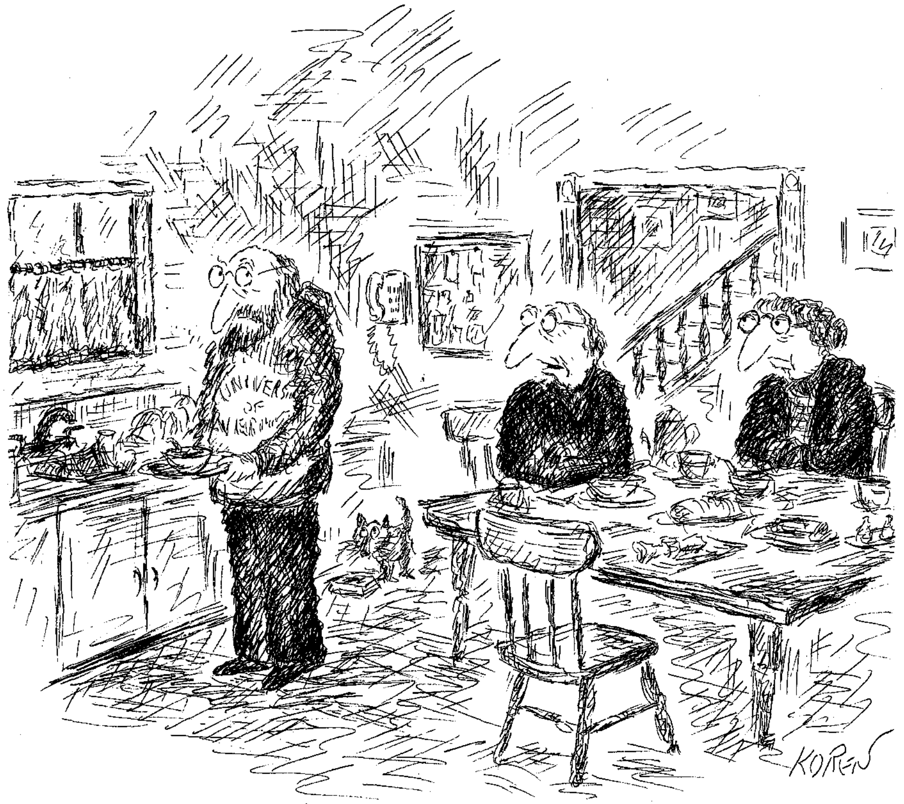
heads and Brancusi's elemental torsos (man's forked essence and woman's curvy one). There is an immense droopy member by Louise Bourgeois, as big as a steer carcass and hanging like one; an elegant little Lachaise of two tits with a vulva cuddled in between; a Jean Arp in which a seal-like phallus presides over two cowlike breasts; and a collaboration between Arp and Sophie Taeuber in which a wooden pole is inserted behind a pair of smiling lips.

Yet lust focusses not on the thing displayed but on the thing denied—it was, after all, the folding and the unfolding, not the thing revealed, that earned Sharon her medal—and so the room, like the exhibition as a whole, has a curiously solemn and childlike air. The actual rhythms of desire—the way smoldering appetite leaps into absurd and ludicrous action (a process registered at one end of the cycle by Brancusi's caressing polishings and at the other end by Twombly's ecstatic smears)—seem absent from the show.

Instead, the dry and didactic art of American postmodernism dominates. Cindy Sherman, Mike Kelley, Robert Gober, Richard Prince, Nan Goldin: all these artists have one point to make, and they have made it before, in New York—sex is a theatre of constructed roles, and if you dress up in different clothes people will think that you belong to a different gender. These "explorations"—a woman avant-gardist photographed with a mustache, a male in bridal wear—seem, as always, insensitive to the surprising resilience of gender, and therefore to the actual effect of their theatrics. What makes drag funny is not how well it works but how poorly. Milton Berle in a bustier and wig always looked like Milton Berle: that was the joke. It still is. Cindy Sherman, no matter how she "masquerades," always looks dour and plain and unhappy, like Cindy Sherman.

The show ends in a dream of neuteredness—that becalmed emptiness which has become the postmodern signature emotion. The final wall label contemplates the possibility that eventually "a child will be a virtual being put into the world outside of his parents, subverting thus the role of masculine and feminine in reproduction." Not to have sex at all is best. The last few works in the show are cold and memorable. One, called "Ovaie," by the Italian artist Luciano Fabro, consists of two long double strands of metal cable laid on the floor and deli-



"Your mother and I think it's time you got a place of your own. We'd like a little time alone before we die."

cately lined with eggs—a metaphor for the immaculate ground zero of reproduction, before desire has come to pollute it. Another, more familiar to New Yorkers, is a Charles Ray "Family Romance": a naked family done in meticulous, lifelike detail, its members all holding hands, and all the same size—"one way to get rid of the anatomical fatality of reproduction," as the catalogue puts it. This mood is summed up earlier in the show by a genuinely funny "answer" piece by the French artist Sylvie Blocher. It shows a single veiled form inside a little room and is entitled "The Bride, Disappointed, Gets Dressed Again."

What is most memorable about "Fémininmasculin" is what it reveals of the simultaneous cultural colonization of Paris by New York and of New York by Paris. On the one hand, the curators of the leading European museum of modern art, given the whole world over which to cast their net, and a whole century to cast it in, have imaginations so thoroughly colonized that they turn to a familiar handful of SoHo favorites. Yet the imaginations of the New York critics who contribute to the catalogue are, in turn, completely in thrall to the intellectual fashions of Paris; the analytic catalogue essays are written by Americans whose minds have been colonized by the French. Rosalind Krauss's essay, for instance, is devoted mainly to a discussion of a little show that Jacques Derrida curated at the Louvre a few years ago. The essay seems at so great a remove from the particulars of "Fémininmasculin" that the point of its inclusion, one can't help feeling, is to demonstrate that having a lot of American stuff is O.K., because the people who support it have already made a ritual obeisance to French judgment.

FOR a New York veteran of the culture wars, though, it is both impressive and disconcerting to see how little fuss is kicked up in Paris by a show like this. Nobody really cares about it—not deep down and with fangs on, the way people care about such things in New York. Postmodernism has a theoretical life here, but that's about the only kind of life it has. The underlying sense of sexual displacement and threat that creates the hysteria about postmodernism in America doesn't exist here. No matter how many cocks and cunts and rumps you show—and the

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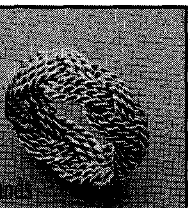

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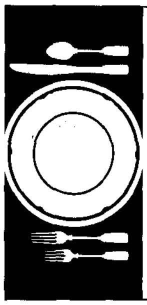

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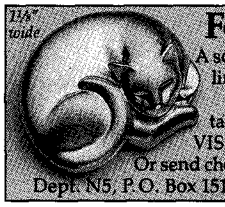

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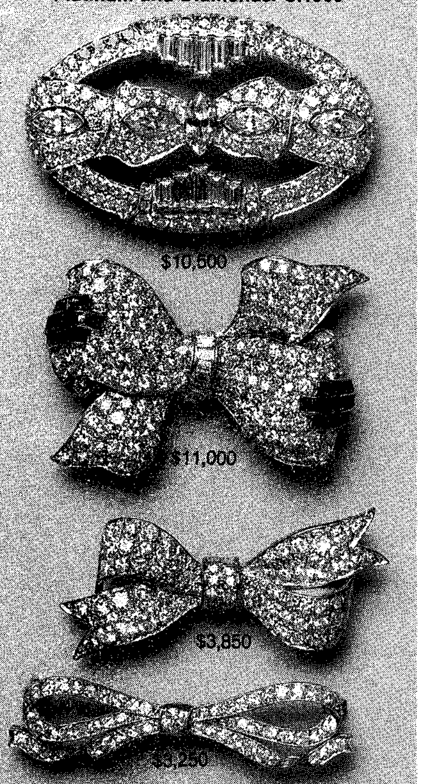

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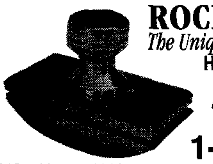

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endpapers of the catalogue are an endless design of them, laid out in repeated rows—it's O.K., because it's all just part of the cultural patrimony. (In America, you couldn't even use the word "patrimony" without starting a fight.) At some point in the early eighties in America, the abstract arguments of French post-structuralism were rekindled by the feminist revolution, which gave those arguments a fire they have never achieved here. In America, postmodernism is essentially feminism (and, latterly, gay liberation) in power, and in a rage: that is the source of its emotional energy.

The feminist revolution arrived here much later, and has done much less. When Alain Juppé cleaned up his Cabinet last week, one of the ways he did it was by firing almost all the women Cabinet ministers; this was actually read, even on the left, as a sign of renewed seriousness. An American abroad realizes that it is the peculiarly American habit of adding to every argument a dollop of sexual messianism—the belief that if you put the right member in the right orifice Jerusalem will come—that gives cultural debates in America their edge of hysteria. Here even the cultural conservatives are skeptics and scoffers, à la Raymond Aron, rather than ranters and screamers, à la Hilton Kramer, while the radicals are radicals only in their writing. The Derridas and Baudrillards prefer a detached sound to an engagé one, and are always searching for a tone of disabused Olympian loft.

Perhaps the disappearance of sexual edge and energy from the everyday life of Paris has, oddly, something to do with that incomplete feminist revolution. For all the neocon and Paglian complaints about a new puritanism, the truth is that feminism in America, by restoring independence and danger to the way women behave and the way men react to that behavior, has added to the sum total of tension on which desire depends. The reverse-spin coding of New York life—this skintight dress is not a come-on but its opposite, a declaration of independence meant not for you but for me—is unknown here. Here the intellectuals wear black, and the models and the starlets wear Alaïa. In New York, the woman in the clinging dress is probably a professor at Hunter, while the girl in black with no makeup reading the French papers may be Sharon Stone. You can tell by the medal. ♦

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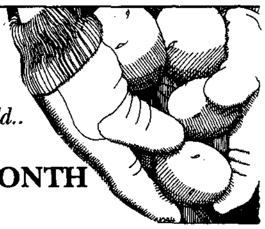

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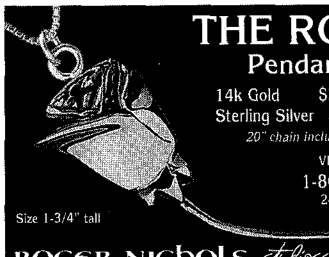

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BOOKS

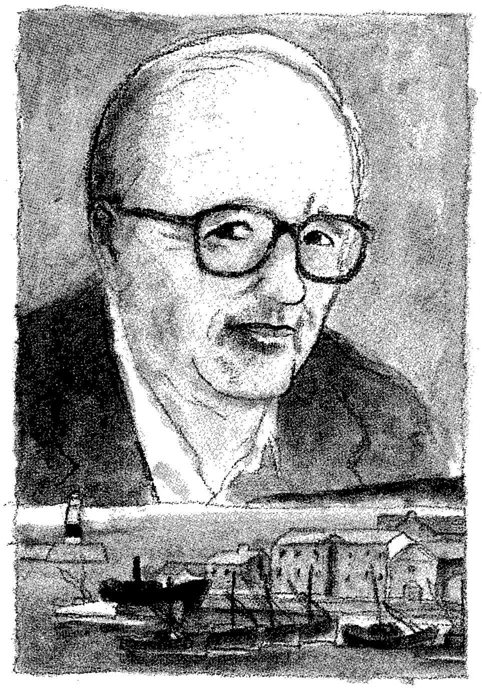
MAN IS AN ISLAND

The brilliant and alienated career of a Manx literary scholar.

BY JOHN UPDIKE

FRANK KERMODE'S memoir, "Not Entitled" (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $23), is an oddly beautiful, or beautifully odd, book—a witty and rueful exercise in self-deprecation, with only the most indirect hints that this abject confessor to failure and dereliction is an esteemed critic and venerated professor. Far from being untitled, he has been knighted for his services to English literature. Yet it is as an inadequate son, faulty pupil, indifferent Navy man, bad interviewee, and dupe of more worldy others that he principally figures n his own accounts. He speaks of his "inveterate conviction that I was far from beng a good teacher," and charges himself with *je-m'en-foutisme*, which my French dictionary defines as "casualness, utter indifference."

Kermode's life, as he here construes it, came in three parts: his birth, childhood, and youth in Douglas, the snug metropolis of the Isle of Man, an anomalous bit of ancient Scandinavia floating in the Irish Sea; his years of wartime service in the British Navy, under a series of mad or corrupt captains; and his subsequent literary and pedagogic careers, which he characterizes in terms of a quietly frantic wandering from post to post and two well-publicized resignations—one from the C.I.A.-sponsored magazine *Encounter*, in 1967, and the other from the King Edward VII Professorship of English Literature at Cambridge, in 1982. Both these terminated involvements illustrate personal traits he describes as a "reluctance to disregard the wrong road" and a "habit of deference that has been a curse largely because the only way to break it seems to be by intemperate action." His sheepishly brilliant career was achieved amid recurrent sensations of alienation and a tropism toward the outsider position which must go back to the Isle of Man.



Frank Kermode: A memoir with the theme of the not-there.

"To be Manx was to be, in an admittedly not deeply wounding way, exiled from the life and language of the English," Kermode writes. The Manx language was dying by the time the author was born, in 1919, though it persisted in phrases and songs. His parents—lower class, if class distinctions need be applied among the twenty thousand insular souls of Douglas—are portrayed tenderly, as fellow-prisoners of the something ominously unsatisfactory, if not "deeply wounding," about their son's childhood:

> Part of the difficulty these kind people experienced in rearing me was that I was gen-

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> erally unable, with my best efforts, to do things that other children seemed to manage without much thought, certainly without the terror that immobilised me at the prospect of failing in tasks where success was the norm, such as tying shoelaces.

The comedy of this sentence does not erase its sadness; the child, at the center of considerable parental expectations, was "fat, plain, shortsighted, clumsy, idle, dirty," and, as he moved through school as the perennial youngest in his classes, bullied. A negotiable scholastic aptitude was slow to bloom, hampered by bad eyes and a paralyzing general misery, but by his mid-teens had blossomed. In 1937, he won a scholarship to the University of Liverpool, on condition that he become a schoolteacher—possibly, as his mother fondly hoped, on the Isle of Man. Kermode had more venturesome ambitions, but perhaps it took the great dislocations of the coming war to thoroughly unMan him. The chapter on his provincial growing up, flavored by the exotic peculiarities of the island (also discussed in his essays "The Faces of Man" and "The Men from Man," which are included in his collection "The Uses of Error"), has the weight of the often pondered, with no false tinge of the idyllic or, on the other hand, of the plaintive. The child was not too blind or self-absorbed to notice, for example, how his father, "still the curly-headed athlete, sat for hours spitting blood into a bowl from his suddenly sunken mouth . . . his youth deserting him early." Our trials of emergence take place while our still-young parents are embarking upon the trials of decline.

THE vast annals of the Second World War cannot hold many warrior reminiscences more weirdly detached from the grand aims than Kermode's. Part of the absurdist impression, no doubt, stems from his own modesty and fondness for minimization. He spent more than five years on ships, any one of which could have been sunk. In considering his academic career, he does speak with a slight edge of those nonveterans, "ordinary members of the Life Club," who have "no idea of what it feels like to confront people ruthlessly dedicated to the idea of ripping you apart or drowning you." He saw relatively little battle, anc dwells upon the maniacal, besotted career Navy men under whom he servec on various futile-sounding missions But at sea near Gibraltar he watched : Catalina piloted by Canadians successfully court destruction by steering int(friendly guns, and a boatload of Allie(sailors board a burning merchant shi that thereupon exploded. "It may be interesting to note," he writes, "that non of the people who died in this little action need have done so." In North Africa, he felt no connection with th campaigns in progress (against the Afrika Corps) or about to be launche (the invasion of Sicily): "To all concer with such matters I was immune, bu in spite of many superficial distraction I knew myself to be radically unhappy having no horizon of unhappiness tha I could ever hope to cross." He discovered then in himself a capacity fo dissoluteness, "a sort of unconsidering recklessness, of pleasure in self-destructiveness." Assignments in th United States and Australia brough some relief, whose pleasurable detail are, with an excess of postwar discretion suppressed: "I omit details of the happiness of Portland. . . . Of the pleasure of [Sydney] I shall not write here, bu they were not negligible." He wa among the armed multitudes in th Pacific spared the invasion of Japan b the dropping of the atomic bomb ("The general opinion was that it savec our lives, and we were unethicall pleased about this"). The Navy left hin with, in 1946, dim professional prospects, an addiction to bridge, a health appetite for liquor, and a literary vocation whose chief fruit was the winnin of a *New Statesman* competition for th translation of a Ronsard sonnet.

IN the lively sketches of academic anc literary personalities and predicaments which follow, it is possible t detect the boy from Man, where England was called simply "away" o "across." His libelproof but vehemen account of his theoretically exalted professorship at Cambridge begins with : dark paraphrase of St. Augustine: "T Cambridge then I came, where a cauldron of unholy hates hissed all abou me." As Kermode pressed for certai arrangements that had been agree upon with the Prime Minister's pa-

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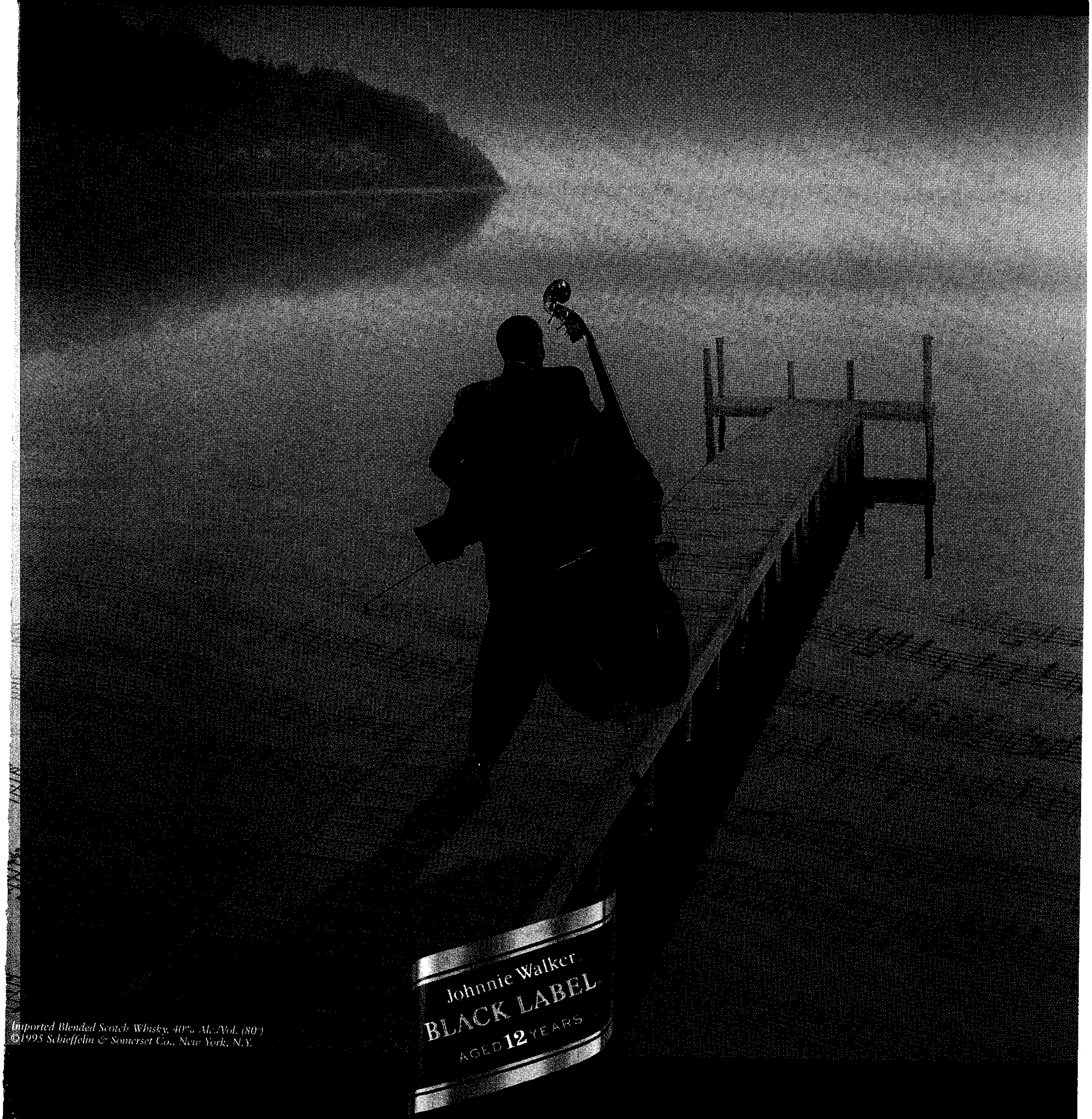
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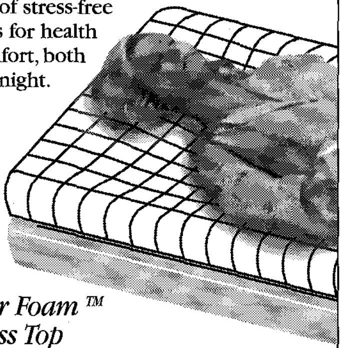
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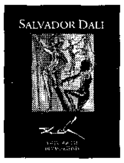
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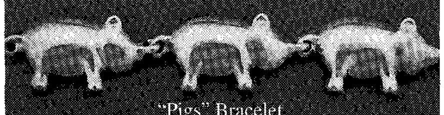
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tronage secretary, his reception went from "chilly" to "cold," with an implication that he "must be a fantasist or a liar." He found the environment implacably change-resistant: "To my alien eye the faults in its system were obvious and even scandalous; to most of my new colleagues, my complaints arose out of mere disaffection, presumption, or ignorance of Cambridge ways." Fresh from heading the English Department of University College, London, he marvelled, "Nobody who had worked in a reasonably sane department elsewhere could have failed to be astonished at the complacency with which these chaotic arrangements were regarded." After a few years, he joined the row over a lectureship denied to an unnamed younger colleague and despaired at the depths of chicanery. "Useless to recount," he indicts, "all the complex manoeuvres, the dirty tricks, the calculated rhetorical performances." The misery of his early school days returned: "I began to have quite serious eye troubles . . . and I would wake in the morning to be at once invaded by the thought that another day of wretchedness had dawned."

At least once before, Kermode had found himself oppressed by entrenched Britishism: placed in charge, at the war's end, of a group of emaciated and disease-ridden British civil servants who had been imprisoned, with their wives, in a Japanese concentration camp on Hong Kong, the twenty-five-year-old officer discovered that these Britons, as soon as they recovered strength enough, demanded all sorts of privileges. "They seemed to think that during their four years of captivity the world, and especially British colonial arrangements, must have remained exactly as they were in December 1941." Most odiously, the women objected to having to share quarters, on a crowded ship, with a Filipino nurse, even though she had acted as midwife to them in the desperate conditions of the Hong Kong camp. Only she, as the rescue mission ended in Sydney, "bothered to say thanks for what in my view, though not in theirs, were the remarkable civilities and kindnesses they had received during their long voyage." It is no accident, perhaps, that the handful of fellow-academics for whom Kermode has fond words include a

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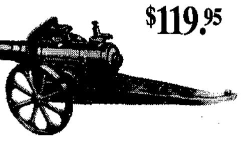
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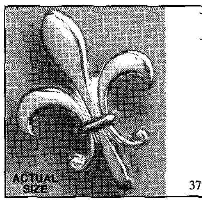
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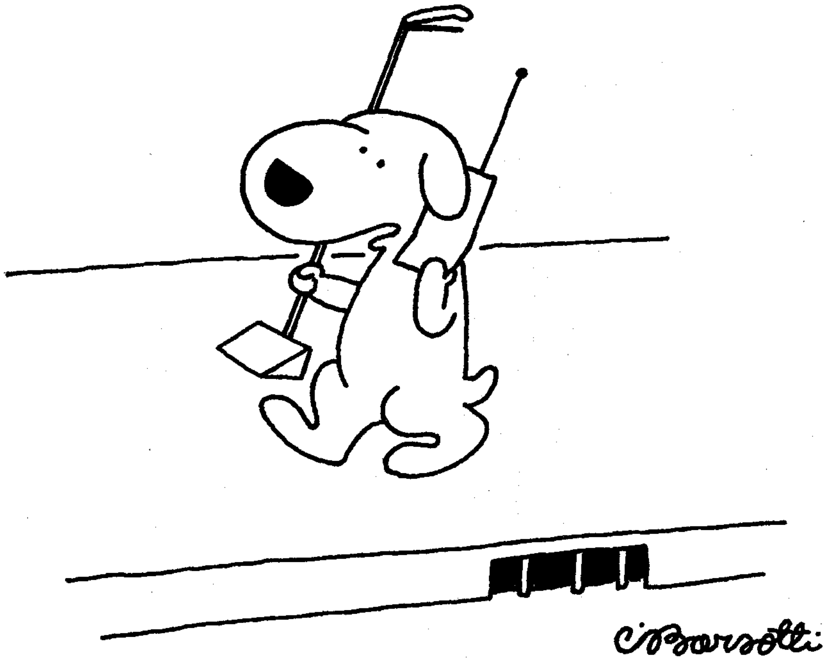

"O.K., I'm on my way home."

• •

cotsman (D. J. Gordon), a Frenchnan (Eugène Vinaver), and a fellowIanxman (Randolph Quirk), and that e has found French thought and merican milieux congenial. Why ermode, thirteen years after abicating the "carnival crown" of the Edvard VII Professorship, continues to ve in benighted Cambridge he leaves p to the reader's frequently challenged nagination.

"Not Entitled" remarkably conveys he "microclimate" of depression at the eart of a clever diffidence while being teadily entertaining, and even poetical. lashes of fancy and a wealth of literary llusions embedded in the text ornaent what could have been a drab and ffectless tale. Of a posh Massachusetts own where, with his second wife, he ved one summer, he writes, "The chef t the country club could slice Virginia am so thin that it was not unknown or a breeze off the ocean to blow the lices away." In the same antic section, his reviewer found himself featured in he book's obscurest sentence: "John Jpdike crawled under an interesting able on the pretence of looking for evilence of its maker's identity, but really o ask in private who all these extraorlinary people were." Does this mean hat others had preceded me under the "interesting" table? No matter: the theme of the not-there pervades this book, beginning with its title and its epigraph from "Coriolanus"—"He was a kind of nothing, titleless." The words "not entitled" come from Kermode's Navy years, when on payday a sailor sufficiently fined for disciplinary cause would be greeted not by a month's wages but by the barked announcement "Not Entitled!" Similarly, when Kermode arrived at Cambridge he found that he had become "a sort of nobody, yet a nobody with a title." Concerning his "failures and half-failures as husband or parent," he proposes that "looking the part while not being quite equal to it seems to be something I do rather well." The uneasy sensation of a fundamental exclusion, of being "not the sort of person I should choose to know if I had any choice in the matter" and of lacking "what appears to be in others a perfectly ordinary skill or tact in handling not only things but persons," has haunted him since his awkward Manx childhood. Yet is not this sensation a common human one? No amount of positive accomplishment and social cheer can cancel it, and it is Kermode's significant accomplishment, in "the insouciance of old age," to have given it so delicate and circumstantial an expression. ♦

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BY ANTHONY LANE

ISBAS, snoopy, chromo, frass. Morphos and gibus, levigate and chitinous. Olivaster ambuscade, viatic vivarium. Elytra calling to cobold. My beloved axilla, my long-lost acreana . . . Oh, fatidic pellicles! Ocellated racemes! Chiromantically cacological, porphyroferous djoys!

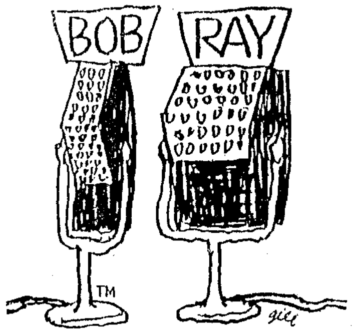
If you are finding your verbal acquaintances a little tired and plain, if you wish to make new friends in the dictionary, then what you need is "The Stories of Vladimir Nabokov" (Knopf; $35). All the words cited above are to be found scurrying along in the underbrush of Nabokov's tales; most of them are rare, though that does not imply that they require rescuing from extinction. "Frass," for example, is rare only because most of us, in our confoundedly narrow existence, seldom come across what the Concise Oxford Dictionary defines variously as "a fine powdery refuse left by insects boring" and "the excrement of insect larvae," whereas Nabokov, onetime research fellow in entomology and all-around bug nut, presumably spent most of his life trying not to step in the frass. "Djoys" is another matter entirely: not a real word at all, to be exact, but the name of the author of "Ulysses" as pronounced by a Russian character and cunningly transcribed by Nabokov. Innumerable readers have delighted in Joyce, but leave it to Nabokov to sneak his delight into a new-minted version of the man's name. It is a trick that demands not just perfect verbal pitch (which Nabokov appears to have enjoyed from the cradle) but a wicked nerve: with one pun, he steps neatly into the noble line of Joyce's heirs.

Whether he belongs there remains an open question. This grand new volume, all six hundred and fifty-five pages, should help us decide. The earliest story dates from 1921, when the émigré author was twenty-one years old and studying at Cambridge, and the latest from 1951, when he was teaching at Cornell and slaving over the hot "Lolita." There are sixty-five stories, thirteen of which have neve before appeared in book form; they offe a startling, cloudless view of a writer's development. Instead of an artist followin the expected path—starting with a precocious roughness and slowly rising to th heights of power—we discover a youn man who is not only gifted, and serenel confident in that gift, but more than abl to hold his own against the sage celebrit that he finally became. The two men ar in the same game. The tyro who wrote i his mid-twenties "He exhaled a megaphone of smoke" is already in the slipstream of the middle-aged Nabokov, th one who noted the "solemn somersaults performed by dolphins in the wake of ship and the disruption of any attempt t read a book on deck: "The inquisitiv breeze would join in the reading an roughly finger the pages so as to discove what was going to happen next."

A similar eagerness urged me o through "The Stories of Vladimir Nabokov": this book is a breeze. I kept wanting to press ahead, all the while wondering why this impulse should be so strong since for much of the time not a lot actually *happens*. The intricate trouble tha Nabokov takes with his plots is exceede only by the energy that he devotes to submerging them beneath the undulations c his prose. It is quite possible to arrive a the conclusion of one of his narrative without knowing precisely what has bee concluded. One of my favorites, "Sprin in Fialta" (1936), spins out a full-throate half-hearted love story through so man offhand flashbacks that, if I were asked t justify my praise, I might not be able t say much more than that it is basicall about spring in Fialta. An earlier tale "Gods" (1923), spends three and a ha pages wandering through a city—seein the sights, shouting out visions, addressing an unspecified lover. Then, suddenl we get this: "Oh, listen—here is something that happened in Paris, about 15 years ago. Early one morning . . ." It's curious device: a fable, a historical foot

PHOTOGRAPH BY IRVING PENN

Vladimir Nabokov, Italy, 1966.



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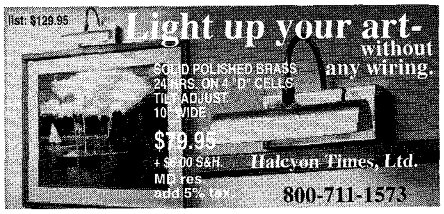

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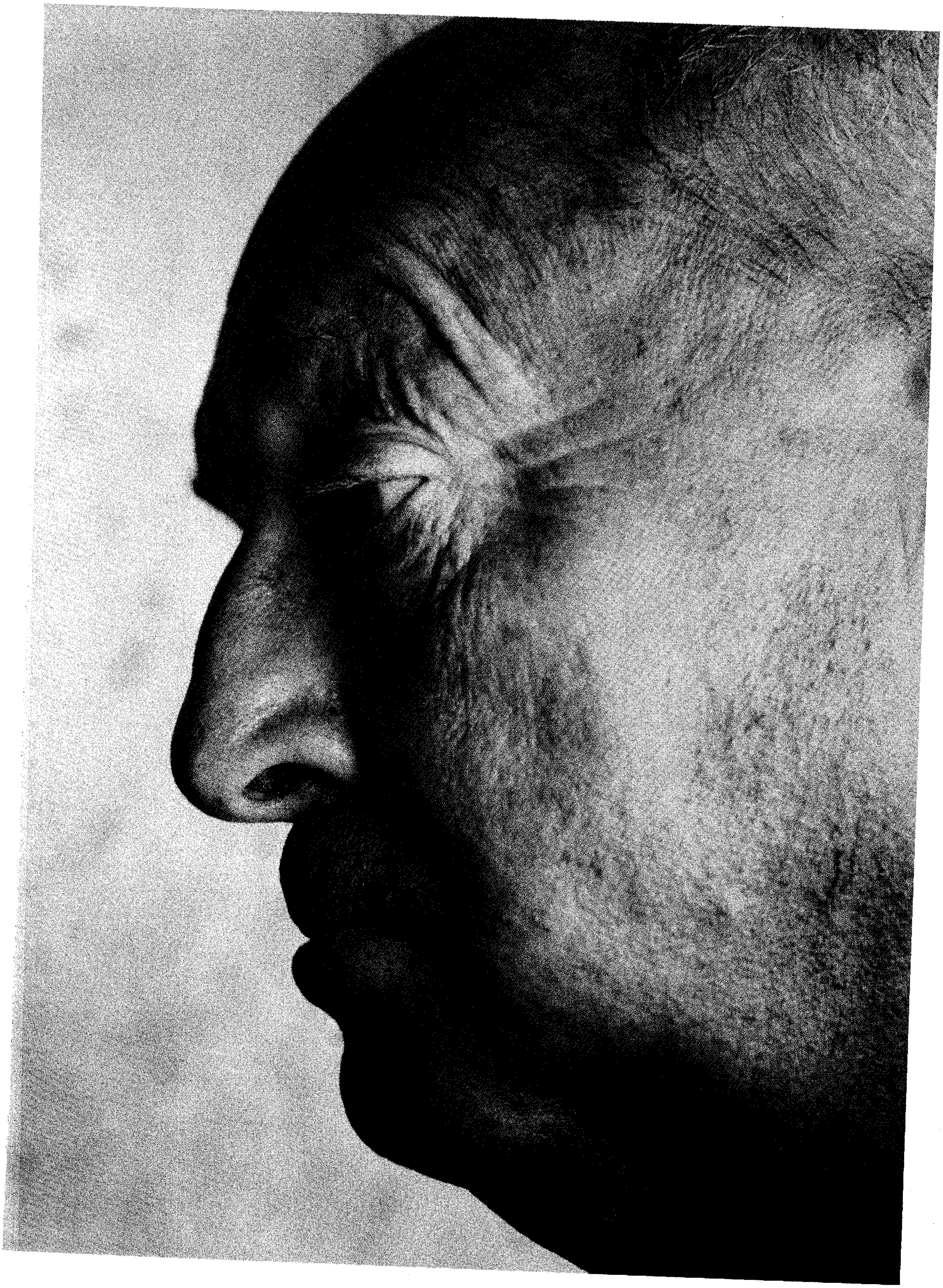

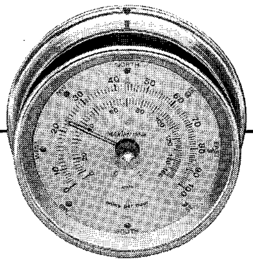

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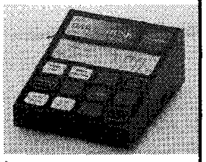

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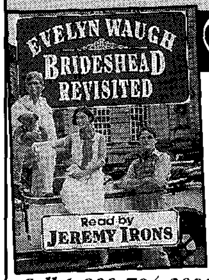

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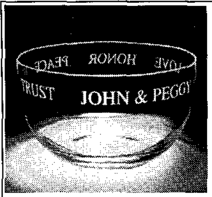

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note flung in our direction like a scrap of cheap gossip. No other writer revels like Nabokov in the unbalancing of traditional structures, in the freaky redistribution of details. The slumbering past is jerked awake by a slap of present tense. Major events flash by like telegraph poles seen from a train, while silly sub-trash is held in the hand and pondered with inordinate care: "Pebbles like cuckoo eggs, a piece of tile shaped like a pistol clip, a fragment of topaz-colored glass, something quite dry resembling a whisk of bast, my tears, a microscopic bead, an empty cigarette package with a yellow-bearded sailor in the center of a life buoy, a stone like a Pompeian's foot, some creature's small bone or a spatula, a kerosene can, a shiver of garnet-red glass, a nutshell, a nondescript rusty thingum related to nothing."

As for the way Nabokov begins his tales—well, where do you start? The opening of "The Wood-Sprite" is the first sentence of the book: "I was pensively penning the outline of the inkstand's circular, quivering shadow." That early alliteration is a little rich, a little pleased with itself, and it is a pleasure that will never wholly fade. "Quivering," however, is pure Nabokov: alert to motions that the rest of us barely register. Some other openings:

> When the curved tip of one ski crosses the other, you tumble forward.
> —"*Wingstroke.*"

> The last streetcar was disappearing in the mirrorlike murk of the street and, along the wire above it, a spark of Bengal light, crackling and quivering, sped into the distance like a blue star. —"*Details of a Sunset.*"

> In front of the red-hued castle, amid luxuriant elms, there was a vividly green grass court. —"*La Veneziana.*"

> My charming, dear distant one, I presume you cannot have forgotten anything in the more than eight years of our separation, if you manage to remember even the gray-haired, azure-liveried watchman who did not bother us in the least when we would meet, skipping school, on a frosty Petersburg morning, in the Suvurov museum, so dusty, so small, so similar to a glorified snuffbox.
> —"*A Letter That Never Reached Russia.*"

> Actually his name was Frederic Dobson.
> —"*The Potato Elf.*"

> In the second place, because he was possessed by a sudden mad hankering after Russia.
> —"*The Circle.*"

> The growth of his power and fame was matched, in my imagination, by the degree of the punishment I would have liked to inflict on him. —"*Tyrants Destroyed.*

> Do you remember the day you and I wer lunching (partaking of nourishment) a couple of years before your death?
> —"*Ultima Thule.*

> Dear V.—Among other things, this is t tell you that at last I am here, in the country whither so many sunsets have led.
> —"*That in Aleppo Once . . .*

And there, in a scattering of nutshells, you have Vladimir Nabokov. I is, I think, impossible to read such sentences without experiencing a chronic desire to carry on. One reason that this collection marks a crucial move in th endless game of trying to fathom Nabokov—a reason that the book is far mor than a handy compendium—is that it renews and clarifies his ability not to lull o enchant his readers but to shock. Agai and again, with polite indifference, th stories drop us in medias res, and leav us to work out what on earth the re might be. Many of Nabokov's novels, i is true, hit the ground running ("Laughter in the Dark" recounts its own forthcoming plot in a couple of brisk, chill sentences), but we soon grow accustome to their stride. This book won't let u settle: it is forever switching tack an pace, daring us to catch up. A sentenc such as "Actually his name was Frederi Dobson" presumes that we have bee chatting like party guests with the narrator, that we have perhaps made an observation with which he disagrees, an that suddenly the rest of the room is listening. The effect is similar to that of Browning monologue: civilized, sociabl and distinctly alarming.

But something else is going on i those beginnings—something that pre vents Nabokov's shocks from felling u completely. The grass court, the spark o light, the morning in St. Petersburg these are the trappings of an obsessive and they quietly reassure us that we ma yet feel at home here. Has any othe modern author compiled such a faithful eccentric, loft-cluttering list of loves Tennis, trains, butterflies, bicycles, ches problems, ripening young women wit unforgettable napes, dawns that chill th bone, Russia dead and gone, varying degrees of madness, infinite variations o the color blue—these props and predilections litter Nabokov's fiction, long an short, from start to finish. They may, indeed, be more than props; they may b

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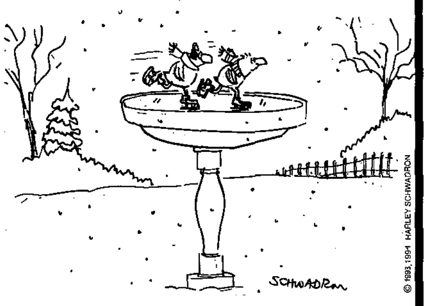

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what drove him to dramatize in the first place. If he were not so famously scornful of Freud, one might almost tag Nabokov with a repetition compulsion; the sequence of traumas that beset him in youth was, by any standard, so terrible that, even if none of his works could be described as therapeutic, it is equally the case that none escape the knowledge of that desolation. Even his brightness has the blues.

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Vladimir was a student at Trinity College, Cambridge, from 1919 to 1922. After Cambridge, he joined his family in Berlin, and many of these stories were written there in the twenties and thirties, under the pseudonym of Sirin. The writer left Germany for Paris in 1937, and never returned. His first book written in English, "The Real Life of Sebastian Knight," was not published until 1941; readers new to Nabokov—and this volume is a good place to kick off—may not realize that at least half his output was written in Russian. (Only ten of the stories gathered here were composed in English.) We are fortunate that the novelist himself, together with his son, Dmitri, and other collaborators, was able to translate his own work; on the other hand, many of the translations were

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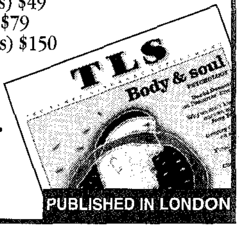

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— RAJASEKHARA (c. seventh century C.E.)

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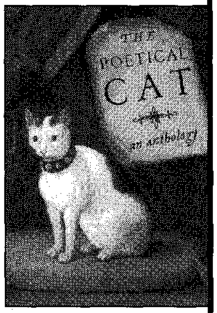

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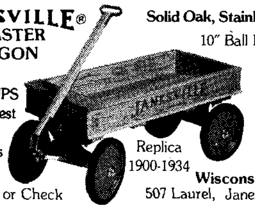

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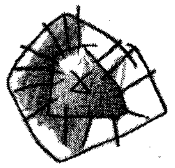
not undertaken until the nineteen-sixties and seventies, some forty or fifty years after the tales were first written. For those of us slackers who can't be bothered to get off our butts and learn Russian, the mystery must therefore remain unsolved: was Nabokov the Berliner really so mellow in his constructions, or are we getting them filtered through a later suavity?

Perhaps we are wrong to worry. Nabokov argued that his native language was in fact better than his acquired one. "My private tragedy," he wrote, "is that I had to abandon my natural idiom, my untrammeled, rich, and infinitely docile Russian tongue for a second-rate brand of English." It's a first-rate sentence, of course; the tragic, as so often happens with Nabokov, backs into a lofty private joke. His detractors (and some of his admirers) would maintain that what he did was not learn but overlearn English. In "Nabokov Translated" (published in 1977, the year Nabokov died) the critic Jane Grayson undertakes a lengthy examination of Nabokov's forked tongue, and concludes, "Personally, I would tend to agree with Nabokov that his Russian is superior—if only because it is less uneven and, on the whole, less mannered than his English. However, whatever general view is held of Nabokov's English, it is undeniable that his command of the language has improved over the years and that with time he has evolved a polished and strikingly original prose style." Well done, Vladimir!

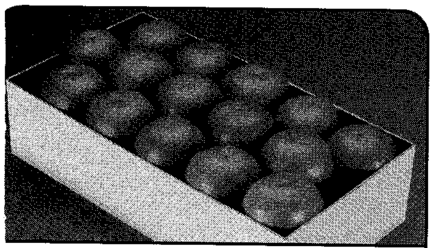


With another writer, such textual comparisons can easily become a grind; with Nabokov, they're part of the game. He has always been a hero to those of bibliographical bent. In his lifetime, he published four short-story collections, which have now been broken down and rearranged in chronological order. The notes at the back of the book are intended to clarify the provenance of each story, but they read like a pastiche of scholarly caution. Nabokov's own remarks on "The Return of Chorb," though perfectly accurate, nevertheless give off that distant, unmistakable odor of amused contrivance which he lent to even the most fleeting of literary tasks:

> First published in two issues of the Russian émigré *Rul'* (Berlin), November 12 and 13, 1925. Reprinted in the collection *Vozvrashchenie Chorba*, Slovo, Berlin, 1930.
>
> An English version by Gleb Struve ("Th
> Return of Tchorb" by Vladimir Sirin) appeare
> in the anthology *This Quarter* (vol. 4, no.
> June 1932), published in Paris by Edw. W
> Titus.

This is useful stuff, but does the pec
ant not relish the wah-wah throb c
"Edw. W." just a fraction too much? An
that "Gleb Struve"—I mean, *really*. H
must be a figment—a slithy word to gy
and gimble with, a melee of joke conso
nants. Struve was in fact a friend c
Nabokov's, and one of the earliest cham
pions of émigré-Russian writin
but the point is that he still *soun*
like one of the novelist's inver
tions—an anagram, perhaps, lik
the "Vivian Darkbloom" wit
which Nabokov scrambled an
smuggled his own name into "Lolita
Throughout his life, Nabokov strove t
emphasize the need for precision—to tak
down the world's particulars and to stak
his claim as one of the great noticers c
modern literature—but there existed i
him a contrary talent for burnishing th
recorded facts until they gleamed like th
alchemical products of the imaginatio
He is, you might say, a semipreciou
writer: neither as bejewelled as his raptu
ous clauses (or his many imitators) initial
suggest nor as epistemologically earth
bound as he himself liked to pretend. Th
indefatigable Nabokov sought only wh
he saw and remembered as true, and y
his fiction leaves you with the appetizin
suspicion that truth is overrated.

LIKE many people who first stumble
upon the genius of Vladimir Nabo
kov at an impressionable, not to say pu
tylike, age, I now enjoy slightly Nabo
kovian relations with his works. I loo
back to a cheerful period when I sat in h
old college and read everything c
his I could find: novels, novellas, in
terviews, the marvellous, maddenin
biography of Gogol. This, I rememb
thinking—this is *style*. Every word pulle
its weight, did its bit for the commo
good of the sentence. How could you fau
the guy? Later, I started to drift an
doubt—to read authors who nod fro
time to time, whose paragraphs can slip
gear, but whose ambitious imperfectio
somehow reach beyond the flawlessness c
Nabokov. In his "Lectures on Literatur
Nabokov wrote that many Western reac
ers will be bored by the agricultural sec
tions of "Anna Karenina," but those a



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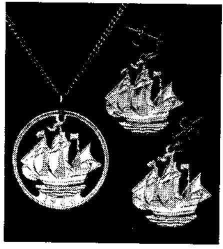

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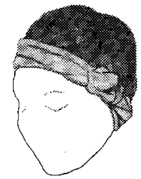

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my favorites; I love the wet grass seeds on the wheels of Levin's cart. And I know that one shouldn't question Nabokov's authority on Russian appellations, but when he suggested that Tolstoy's Prince Oblonsky should properly be addressed as "Steve," my devotion took a bad knock. Steve! What about Nabokov himself, the man who coolly pinned down his characters as he did his damned butterflies? How about Vlad the Impaler?

Well, I'm sorry that I wavered. Once more, I pledge my faith, and I admit that it took "The Stories of Vladimir Nabokov" to bring me back. Given that most of its contents have been readily available for the last twenty years, however, why should we celebrate their reappearance? For one thing, there is the unequalled pleasure of submitting to Nabokov in full flow, when his words boil like a witches' brew of music and sex:

> He poured a small mound of the powder on his thumbnail; greedily applied it to one nostril, then to the other; inhaled; with a flip of his tongue licked the sparkling dust off his nail; blinked hard a couple of times from the rubbery bitterness, and left the toilet, boozy and buoyant, his head filling with icy delicious air.

Who needs cocaine when thirty-five dollars' worth of good prose can hit you with highs like that? The effect of such felicities en masse is not only addictive; they point to the finesse of Nabokov's ear but, more crucial, to the extreme and unembarrassable weirdness of his invention, the flight plans of his fancy. This volume of stories offers, among other things, a Jamesian oddity in which characters slip in and out of a Renaissance oil painting; a secret acrostic, spelled out in the initial letters of the words in a story's final sentence and calculated to send a message from two of its characters, now dead; one tale about a dragon, another about a furry angel in a hotel room, a third about Elijah crashing his chariot; an elf, a sprite, a governess; hallucinated accounts of travel, both tropical and interplanetary; and a peculiarly vicious horror story in which a professor frightens his wife to death by slipping into her warm bed the cold skeleton of a hunchback. Even nastier, in a way, is the infant memory that flickers in "Terror":

> I raised my still sleepy eyes while pressing the back of my neck to my low pillow and saw, leaning toward me over the bed head, an incomprehensible face, noseless, with a

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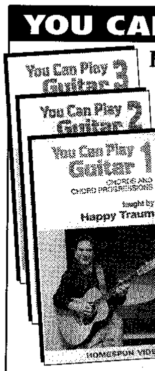

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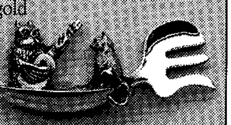

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hussar's black mustache just below its octopus eyes, and with teeth set in its forehead. I sat up with a shriek and immediately the mustache became eyebrows and the entire face was transformed into that of my mother, which I had glimpsed at first in an unwonted upside-down aspect.

Proust remembered with longing his mother's bedside kiss; Nabokov, a self-confessed Proustian, inverts that beatific moment and smothers love with fear. He adds, in a footnote, that the story was written "around 1926, one of the happiest years of my life." Is he being blithe or monstrous? Or is it more fun to be both?

For a long time, the image of Nabokov that held sway was one of arrogance and hardness of heart. More recently, critics such as Richard Rorty have warmed the writer up; they have chosen to stress his ferocious loathing of cruelty in all its guises, personal and political. Brian Boyd, in the introduction to his learned, faintly exhausting two-volume biography, sets out to rescue his subject from the charge of frivolous ingenuity. "In fact he was deeply serious as a thinker—an epistemologist, metaphysician, moral philosopher, and aesthetician," Boyd writes. Poor Professor Nabokov. It should be added that he also enjoyed sunbathing. A more nimble, less heavy-weather critic is required to do Nabokov justice—someone like Michael Wood, whose new study, "The Magician's Doubts: Nabokov and the Risks of Fiction" (Princeton), is the best book yet written on the novelist. Wood concentrates on the American works: "Pnin," "Lolita," "Ada," and the other successes that sprang from the second half of Nabokov's life. One of Wood's graceful ruminations concerns "Signs and Symbols," a 1948 tale in which an elderly immigrant couple pay a thwarted visit to their mentally unstable son. They are pestered, at the close, by a phone call; it may or may not be a wrong number. The narrative doesn't go anywhere: it tosses and turns in the worst, most ominous kind of waking dream. As Wood says, "What seems to me most striking about the story is its immense shadowy background of pain and frightening possibility; not its secret but its silence. It is full of things not said, fuller than Nabokov's writing often seems."

There is, I suspect, a prosaic reason for this: "Signs and Symbols" is a short story. It embodies the quite unexpected importance that accrues to "The Stories o Vladimir Nabokov." I would not claim that all, or even many, of the tales are masterpieces of the order of "Signs and Symbols," but most freshen and redirec our notion of Nabokov by suggesting tha his notorious skills—his reverence for the unrepeatable moment, his plucking o epiphanies out of nowhere, the rainbow of his sensory perceptions, the waste bin to which he consigns didactic purpose—were sometimes most gainfully employed in short fiction. Of course, the major novels will endure, but I like to think tha Nabokov the sprinter will keep up with Nabokov the marathon man.

So why did he stop sprinting? The final story, "Lance," was completed in November of 1951, a year before the purported death of Humbert Humbert This whole volume, in fact, rustles with premonitions of "Lolita"; when Humbert lies awake in a hotel, frozen with desire for the stepdaughter by his side hearing the "gurgle and gush" of the "manly, energetic, deep-throated toilet" that flushes throughout the night, he is really listening to a long-distance echo of the water that "gulps and gurgles in its hidden pipes" in a Berlin paragraph of 1925. It would be wrong to think o the tales as preparatory, as mere targe practice for the American hits so admired by Wood; but insofar as Nabokov's stories document and improvise on the first half of his split life, it seems only fitting that their edgy melodies should cease at a time when his second-act fame was beginning to swell, when material security was not far off, and when the perpetual wanderer had at last against expectation, found himself a home. We have grown used to the ludic persona, rarefied as mountain air that was projected by the older Nabokov, and it is good to be reminded of the young man who preceded him—the uprooted European, low on cash, who discovered that the punch and blaze o short stories were ideal for his purposes In the pages of this new book, Nabokov seems less aloof than elsewhere: his talent for ecstasy becomes apprehensive, caught up in blue-rimmed, insomniac worries and in glimpses of a capricious afterlife. These stories are incantations, and they summon the strangest things. Vladimir Nabokov, of all people, finally falls under his own spell. ◂

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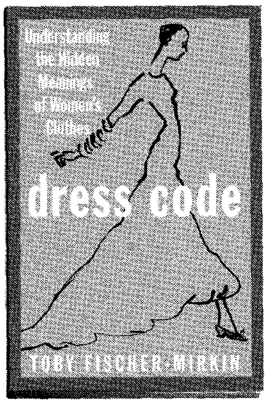

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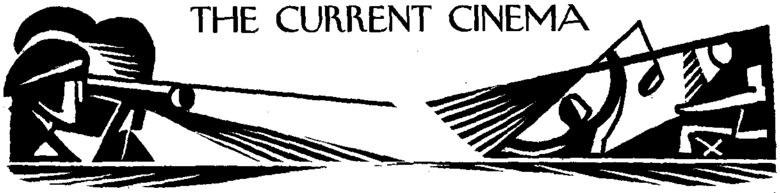


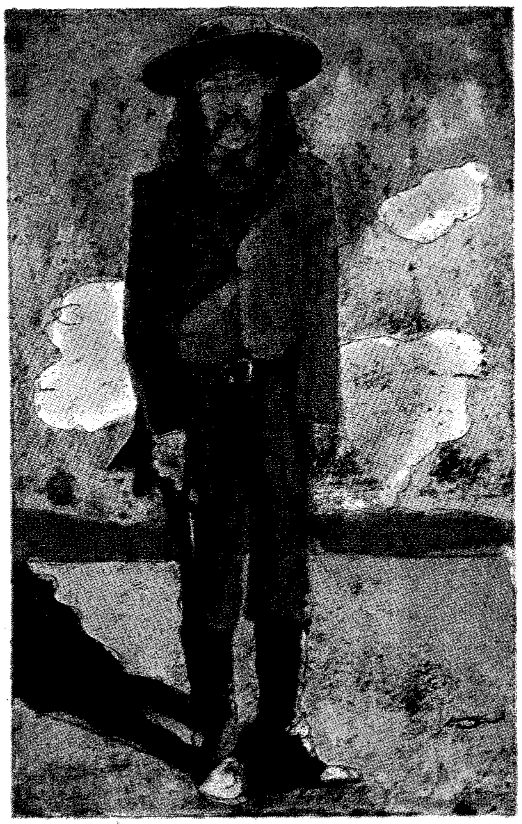
THE CURRENT CINEMA

LARGER THAN LIFE

Walter Hill's "Wild Bill" and Martin Scorsese's "Casino"

BY TERRENCE RAFFERTY

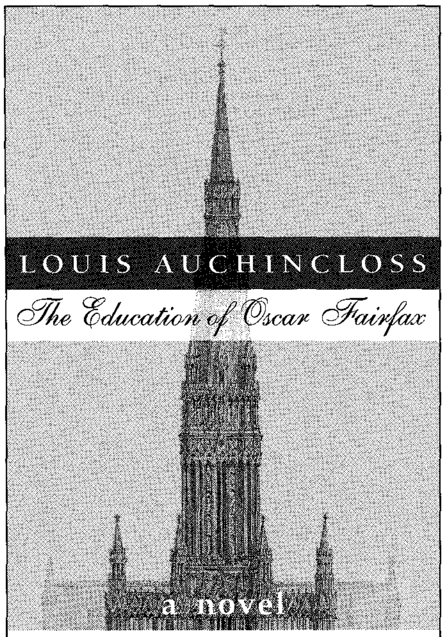
JAMES BUTLER HICKOK, known as Wild Bill, is one of the legendary figures of the American frontier—that is, the sort of gun-toting hero whose reputation, built up by dime-novel hyperbole and the white-hat mythologizing of Hollywood Westerns, now looks ready for the wrecking ball. Over the past couple of decades, the chivalric myths of the West have lost most of their allure for filmmakers and film audiences; Westerns aren't a staple movie genre anymore, and the few that do get produced tend to play down the heroic aspects of the characters and the settings. Some contemporary Westerns try to win us over with revisionist authenticity—a "realistic" manner that turns the fabled Wild West into a world of nastiness, treachery, and unchecked violence. Others favor an elegiac style, which can make the Old West appear positively decrepit. What's refreshing about Walter Hill's new Western, "Wild Bill," is that it tells the story of a larger-than-life frontier hero without stripping him of either his dignity or his vitality. This film's Hickok (Jeff Bridges) isn't the romantic gunfighter of De Mille's 1936 epic "The Plainsman" (in which Gary Cooper played Wild Bill), but he isn't a fraud or a psychopath, either. And, although most of the picture's action takes place in the last few days of the hero's life, when he was past his prime, "Wild Bill" never allows us to underestimate him. Even with failing eyesight and a flagging appetite for gunplay, Bill is a dangerous man; only someone very young and very foolish would dare to imagine that he'd be easy to cut down.



Jeff Bridges as Wild Bill Hickok: evoking the physical grace of the old-time Western stars.

ROBERT ANDREW PARKER

Hill is neither young nor foolish. He knows that Hickok's reputation as a tough, fearless gunman is largely deserved (Wild Bill may not have killed more than a hundred men, as pulp novelists of his time and credulous latter-day biographers have claimed, but the more modest body count of his documented gunfights—between a dozen and two dozen—is still mighty impressive), and he seems to understand, too, that the demolition of a Western myth isn't a project to be undertaken lightly or heedlessly—that something of value might be buried with the corpses of fallen heroes. "Wild Bill" lays Hickok to rest tenderly, with full honor given to both the real, flawed man and the fancy-dress icon of frontier lore. This Wild Bill Hickok is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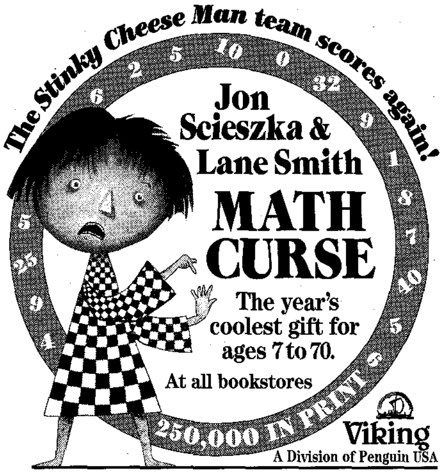
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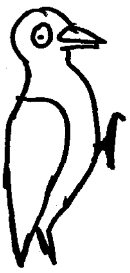
tired, aimless, and, in surprising ways, vulnerable, but he isn't small.

The historical Wild Bill was, by all accounts, a commanding figure: tall, handsome, long-haired, and well dressed (almost to the point of dandyism). In the eighteen-sixties and seventies, he travelled restlessly through the frontier territories, making his living as a scout, hunter, gambler, and lawman, and wherever he went reports of his exploits (actual and fanciful) preceded him, magnifying the effect of his already formidable presence. In the first twenty minutes or so of "Wild Bill," Hill supplies a dizzying, nonchronological montage of brief episodes from the hero's career, which recklessly mingles established facts and pungent apocrypha, and thereby gives the audience a vivid sense of what it might have been like for the people of his time to see Wild Bill Hickok appear in town. He makes a hell of an entrance. In these opening scenes, Hill seems to distill the essence both of Bill's legend and of Western-movie tradition, and it's an intoxicating brew: Hickok jousts with a mourning Indian warrior; in a split-second burst of gunfire he kills four men who confront him in a dim, lonely bar on the plains; he reluctantly accepts a challenge from a man in a wheelchair (Bruce Dern), and, after having himself tied to a chair and set down in the middle of the street, draws his revolver and guns down his adversary; in another gunfight, his swift reflexes leave both his opponent and his own deputy—who came up behind him unexpectedly—dead. The quick, brilliantly staged vignettes are more than a display of virtuosity, and more, too, than a deft résumé of the deeds and tall tales that constitute the Wild Bill legend: they tell us, with splendid economy, almost everything we need to know about the man himself. Watching these scenes, you understand why Hickok was respected and feared: in the environment of the Old West, survival depended on speedy, precise reactions to danger, and Bill, for most of his life, was speedier and more precise than anyone who crossed his path.



After that heady, awestruck opening, both the movie and its protagonist settle down, in a muddy primitive town called Deadwood, in the Dakota Territory. Bill, looking for peace and quiet, drinks
and plays cards in the company of a sma
entourage of admirers: California Jc
(James Gammon), his burly trail com
panion; Charley Prince (John Hurt),
protective and slightly sycophantic Er
glish gentleman; and the famous Calam
ity Jane (Ellen Barkin), who dresses an
swears like a man, and carries—alon
with her guns and her bullwhip—a ser
ous torch for Bill. By this time, Hicko
is only thirty-nine, but he looks olde
Hill's screenplay (which is loosely base
on Pete Dexter's novel "Deadwood" ar
Thomas Babe's play "Fathers and Sons
audaciously slows the action to matc
the ruminative, rather indolent pace
this final stage of the hero's life, an
even more daringly, begins to shift tl
story's focus from the clear, vibrant su
faces of the Western experience to tl
murkier territory beneath. There's a del
cate comic beauty in the way this mov
is constructed: what happens to Bi
in Deadwood is that after all those yea
of living as a man of action—decisiv
uncomplicated, unrepentant—he suc
denly feels himself ambushed by re
flection, and even, occasionally, b
regret, and he's obviously puzzled abo
how to repel the attacks. The appearan
of a twitchy young man named Jac
McCall (David Arquette), who claims t
be the son of one of Hickok's old flame
Susannah Moore (Diane Lane), an
threatens to kill the aging gunfight
for having mistreated her, stimulates
Bill the unfamiliar impulse to look bac
His eyesight "comes and goes," he say
but visions of the past just kee
coming, unbidden; in a seri
of mournful black-and-whi
flashbacks, which are sometim
dreams and sometimes opiun
induced reveries, he sees himse
courting Susannah, leaving he
returning to her, and, after killir
her lover in a showdown, leavir
her again. He also remembers a
eerie encounter, in a snow-blinding wi
derness, with an elusive fox and an ar
gry Indian: the Indian tells him tl
omen that will signal the hour of h
death.

"Wild Bill" is both thoroughly moc
ern and deeply old-fashioned—an ele
giac Western that is as funny and
rambunctious and exciting as the unsel
conscious genre classics of yesteryea
The picture's rich humor actually deriv
from that elegiac mood: we watch

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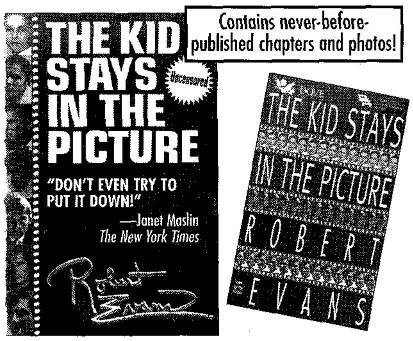
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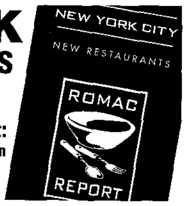

creep up on a character who clearly wants no part of it, and fights it, hilariously, with every ounce of his still considerable strength. The movie is a complex portrait of an essentially simple man—a man who is, in fact, as alarmed by the onset of complexity in himself as he is by the onset of blindness. Hill is more than fortunate to have Jeff Bridges as his Wild Bill. The role is so subtly conceived that only a great actor could play it without confusing the audience (and himself). Bridges is the best actor alive. Luckily, he's also tall and handsome, and he looks terrific in the flowing hair style that Hickok favored. And he's one of the few contemporary leading men who evoke the assurance and the physical grace of the old-time Western stars. He moves as eloquently as Henry Fonda in "My Darling Clementine," and his litheness and apparent nonchalance are crucial to the character: Wild Bill's ease in his own skin is part of what protects him from unnecessary confrontations. (Who wants to tangle with a man who looks so relaxed?) Bridges speaks his terse lines softly but gives them a clipped, blunt rhythm that conveys the character's impatience with, and even distrust of, speech. Although Wild Bill isn't a stupid man, talking is one of those (rare) things that don't come naturally to him: it's a little contemplative for his taste.

As Bridges plays the character, Wild Bill's horrified bout of retrospection is both touchingly comic and, in a peculiar way, genuinely heroic. Even when he suspects that his end may be approaching, Bill does his damnedest to remain who he is and to live up to what he's supposed to be. Every so often, we catch him checking himself out in a barroom mirror, and, weirdly, there's never a hint of vanity in the action. It just looks like something he's obliged to do—an indication, perhaps, of his determination always to go out exactly the way he came in. The movie, respecting his wishes, gives him a sendoff that's the equal of his spectacular entrance. The final scenes of "Wild Bill" are a prolonged and faintly absurd death watch, in which Hickok, cornered, waits irritably for McCall and a gang of hired killers to work up the gumption to shoot him. He's unnervingly calm, perfectly poised between his mirror-image selves: as a mere human being he knows that he can't do much

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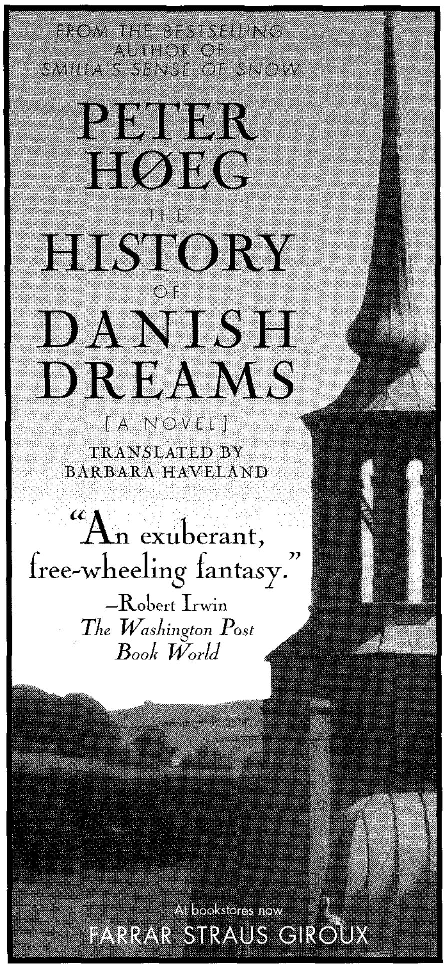
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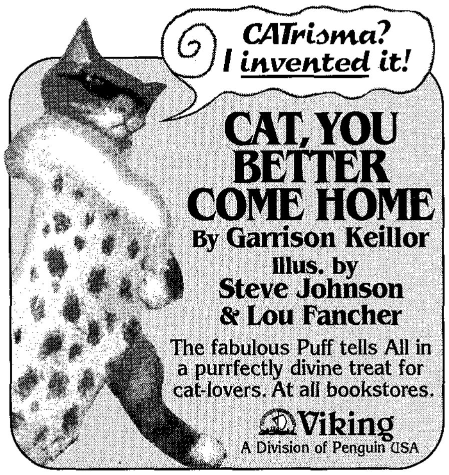
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about the situation he's in, and, if he dies right there, so be it; as a legend he knows that killing him would be the biggest, scariest thing any of these men have ever done, and that there's a good chance they aren't up to it. And although, as it turns out, one of them actually does manage to fire the bullet that dispatches Wild Bill to his eternal reward, Bill nevertheless seems to have got the better of his enemies. In a similar way, "Wild Bill" makes other contemporary Westerns look clumsy, mean-spirited, and, for all their ostentatious realism, fundamentally false. This picture finds the comic truth in Western myth, and does so not by challenging it but by the simpler, more elegant means of looking it straight in the eye. Wild Bill Hickok may have been hard to kill, but Bridges and Hill do something harder, and infinitely more valuable: they keep him alive.

Martin Scorsese's "Casino" clocks in at close to three hours; it takes almost twice as long as "Wild Bill" to tell a story that isn't half as interesting. The epic running time of "Casino" is shockingly disproportionate to the size of the main characters: Sam Rothstein (Robert De Niro), a mob-connected casino manager in Las Vegas; his wife, Ginger (Sharon Stone), who is a former hooker and hustler, and who rebels against domesticity by drinking and drugging and occasionally running away to rejoin her old lover and pimp, Lester Diamond (James Woods, in a real oil spill of a performance); and Nicky Santoro (Joe Pesci), a vicious gangster, who begins as Rothstein's protector and ends up as his nemesis. Against the garish background of Vegas in the seventies and early eighties, these insectlike figures play out a petty drama of greed, jealousy, and depraved indifference to human life, while the voice-over narrations of Rothstein and Santoro try strenuously to persuade us that something weighty and tragic is going on—that they had paradise and lost it. What the audience sees, however, is a bunch of unbelievably touchy people yelling at each other in an ugly town in the middle of nowhere. At times, Scorsese and his co-screenwriter, Nicholas Pileggi (who was also his collaborator on "GoodFellas"), seem aware of the ironic distance between the characters' inflated self-images and their skimpy, impoverished souls, but for the most part the filmmakers appear to be as clueless as th people on the screen.

And, in any event, the ironic spectac of small people living large isn't near resonant enough to compel viewers' a tention for three hours. The narrative o "Casino" has a random, jerky, hit-o miss quality. Individual sequences— mostly brief documentary-style passag on the arcane operating procedures o casinos—are lively and superbly edite but each provides no more than a mo mentary rush, like a good hand of car in a long, dreary night of bad one Scorsese certainly hasn't forgotten ho to make a movie; what he appears t have forgotten is why. "Casino" frant cally reshuffles themes and techniqu from "New York, New York," "Ragin Bull," "The King of Comedy," an especially, "GoodFellas" without ev finding a winning combination. Ston and De Niro bring a certain chilly competence to their tense domestic scene she kvetches and cajoles; he does om nous slow burns. But Scorsese has show us this sort of poisonous relationshi many times before; here it feels like mental cruelty by the numbers. And Pesci shtick isn't aging well. Once again, Scorsese has him playing a volatile, impu sive, motormouthed short guy, and th result is an embarrassing, grotesque self-parodic performance.

One of the picture's funniest sequenc is a brisk little essay on how casinos tu winners into losers. A Japanese high roll walks away from Rothstein's tables wit fistfuls of the casino's money, but th manager, we discover, has a simple an devastatingly effective strategy for reco ering the loot: he mobilizes his employees to prevent the lucky man from makin the last plane out of town, and then— graciously, apologetically—offers him fr accommodations for the night, knowin that he won't be able to resist the im pulse to try his luck one more time. Th high roller, of course, loses everything, an then some. As you watch "Casino" circ its empty center interminably—aroun and around the movie goes, and whe it stops nobody knows—you can't hel feeling that Scorsese should have learne something from the parable of the un fortunate gambler. It's sad to think th this extraordinarily gifted filmmaker n longer knows when to walk away fro the table, or how to tell a vision of pa adise from a temptation in the desert.

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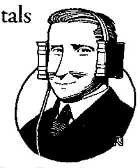

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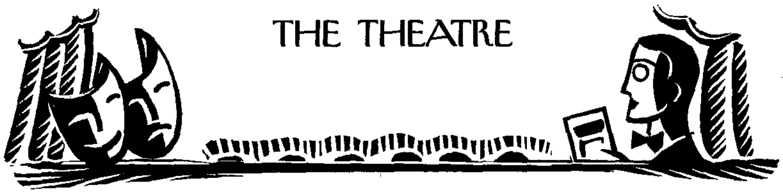
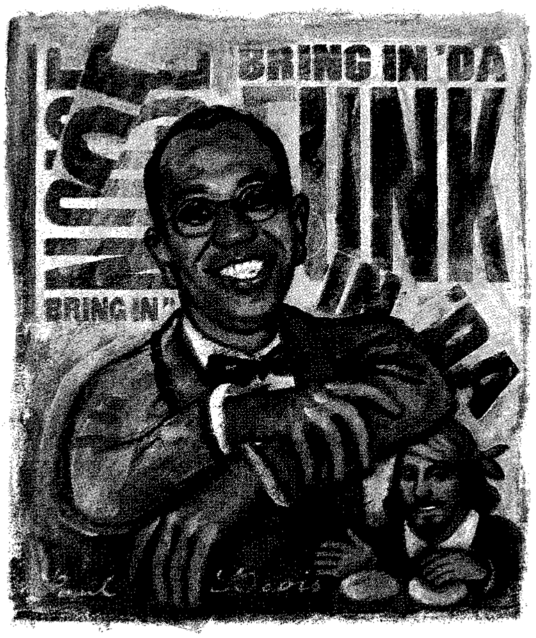


BIG AND BAD WOLFE

A tap-dance masterwork at the Public, and "The Tempest" on Broadway.

BY JOHN LAHR

"SHOWSTOPPING" is a word that critics don't have occasion to use much these days. Once in a while, a song will arouse an audience to cheer or a comedian will rock a crowd so hard that it has to catch its breath or a star will strut his stuff so exuberantly that we lose all sense of gravity and jump out of our seats in glee. To get one of these moments in a show is lucky; to get two is exceptional; but to get seven—which is what the director George C. Wolfe and the dancer-choreographer Savion Glover do at the Public Theatre in their fabulous "Bring In 'da Noise/Bring In 'da Funk"—is heroic. The show's heroic energy has its roots in the black experience. If you'd been sitting around the table with Wolfe at the beginning of rehearsals, you would have heard him expound on the historical context of the show's razzle-dazzle. "Bring In 'da Noise" tells the story of tap and of the wayward progress of the African-American beat that tap makes sensational. "One phenomenon of integration is that a whole lot of information has not been passed on," Wolfe told the cast, with his rapid-fire delivery. "The period from the end of the Civil War to the twenties was an unbelievable time for the black people in this country. During slavery, black people were somebody else's definition. Slavery ended, and black people came out of the starting gate. Phenomenal things were accomplished, including the invention of jazz. That history is what this piece is trying to celebrate. Black people took control of American culture. They had an influence during slavery, but afterward they took control, the way they still do to this day—with language, with the way they dressed." And with music, as Wolfe hardly needed to mention to the prodigiously talented Glover, the tappers who go by the name Real Tap Skills (Baakari Wilder, Jimmy Tate, Vincent Bingham, and Dulé Hill), and the street drummers Jared Crawford and Raymond King, who call themselves Drummin Too Deep.



George C. Wolfe: making a gorgeous clatter, translating the fury of the black experience.

PAUL DAVIS

Wolfe, who collects folk art, is a showman of folk expression. His best work is a kind of anthropological excavation of the buried treasures of the black experience: the tall tale, in "Spunk," his adaptation of Zora Neale Hurston's short stories; jazz, in "Jelly's Last Jam"; and now the percussion of tap in "Bring In 'da Noise/Bring In 'da Funk." Wolfe is attempting not only to return tap to black culture but to give black culture back to tap. "I want you guys to look at those pictures," he said at the rehearsal, pointing to a wall display that featured

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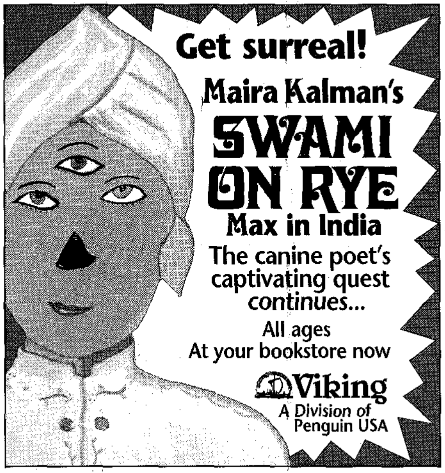

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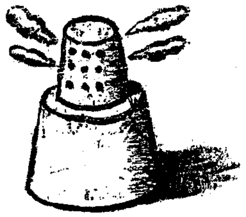
a Xeroxed quotation from the late black writer Henry Dumas: "One of the greatest roles ever created by Western man has been the role of Negro." Around the quotation, the wall was covered with pictures. Photographs of lynchings and riots juxtaposed with images of Bill Robinson (with Shirley Temple), the smiling Nicholas Brothers, and Billy Kersands' Minstrels, formed a kind of African-American time line of grief and gladness. "Each era had its sense of style," Wolfe told his cast. "The way they posed. The way they held their heads. There was Southern style, Northern style, I-got-a-lot-of-money style, I-got-no-money-but-I'm-gonna-act-like-I-got-a-lot-of-money style." "Bring In 'da Noise/Bring In 'da Funk" makes a drama out of these subtle shifts of presentation and rhythm as it charts the evolution of the black beat, from its rural Southern beginnings to its Northern urbanization and its present hip-hop incarnation in the choreography of Glover and his homeboy hoofers.



At one point in the show, Glover, dancing in front of a triptych of mirrors, performs a tap homage to the great rhythm tappers Jimmy Slyde, Chuck Green, Buster Brown, and Lon Chaney. Over Glover's astonishing moves, Wolfe plays a tape of the dancer's voice. "People think tap dancin' is arms and legs and all this big ol' smile," Glover is heard to say as he taps. "Naw, it's raw. It's rhythms, it's us. It's ours." Glover makes fierce, passionate, complex music with his feet. The lighting designers Jules Fisher and Peggy Eisenhauer sculpt his dynamism in subtle, moody pools of light. Glover and his troupe can "hit": their gorgeous clatter is their liberation, translating the fury of the black experience into fun. Wolfe doesn't want to freeze the smile of tap, exactly; he wants to find ways for the dancers to be themselves in their dance, to embrace the anger in tap's poetic show of aggression. He wants to deconstruct the tap dancer's smile, that emblem of both survival and submission. "As a person of color, you always have to send a signal that it's safe to come toward you," Wolfe said during the rehearsals. "You always have to put up this extraordinary signal that very often has nothing to do with the emotional complexity of what you're doing or who you are." Wolfe pushes the boundaries this notion of safety and violates tl archetype of the dancer as a tap-hap figure of delight. Early in the sho as the beat starts to assert itself in an bling rural rhythms, the beaming Baak Wilder does a shuffle on top of a ba of cotton. By the end of the dance, tl bale has been transformed into a ga lows, and he is no longer high-steppi but twitching. In one frenzied nun ber, called "Industrialization," the dan ers take their places on stark steel scaffolding ar are gradually transform into interchangeable parts mechanistic rhythms crea a dehumanizing din. He tap is not just the sound joy; it's the tattoo of oppre sion, and the dancers are captives sen ing back messages from their solita confinement. This tone may irritate son white theatregoers who don't want th ecstatic cocktail laced with bitters, b it has a kick that comes straight fro the streets.

Wolfe is most cogent when he le laughter play off outrage. The show a gues that the beat got lost when it w coöpted by the all-singing, all-danci ballyhoo of Hollywood—where tap b came a flashy vehicle of romance for whi dancers, while a black man, if he had female partner, danced with a child. Ba kari Wilder, playing a character nam Uncle Huck-a-Buck, sends up the B Robinson teeth-'n'-smiles stereotyp singing, "Who de hell cares if I acts fool/When I takes a swim in my swi ming pool?" He proceeds to dance wi Lil Darlin, a blond doll operated fro behind by Glover. (Her feet are attach to his pink tap shoes.) It's a clever in age, but this satire is topped at the e of the evening, when Glover and h crew try to hail cabs, which won't st for them. Wolfe's point about the w black people have to signal their no threatening intentions is literally tapp out: one dancer waves; another, in jack and tie, holds up his credit card; a thi in military uniform, carries a copy Colin Powell's autobiography. Th stomp downstage together in a furio barrage of taps. "Taxi!" they yell befo coming to a simultaneous halt and fli ping the driver the bird.

Wolfe has titled one early secti of his show "Som'thin from Nuthin hich bears out Zora Neale Hurston's ictum about the black person's origi-ality: "While he lives and moves in the iidst of a white civilization, everything iat he touches is re-interpreted for his wn use." The show celebrates the trans-ormation of the ragtag into the glori-us. In a section called "The Pan Hand-rs," the duo Drummin Too Deep wear ests festooned with pots and pans. hey play one another before turning make a marvellous racket on an ar-y of kitchenware hung from ropes. etween the bravura exhibitions of rumming and dancing, Wolfe wedges the fine jazz voice of Ann Duques-ay and the rapping of Reg E. Gaines. Gaines's sharp words, when you can ear them, would be better served by an ctor with an attitude than by a poet king one.) "Be oxtails and pig cuts a boss toss down," he says. "We takes den makes us da finest feast round"—nother example of deprivation turned nto delight.

The genius of Glover's choreography nd the exhilaration of the experience istract the public and the performers om the realm of pain out of which the ance comes. Wolfe wants us to pay tention not just to the public show f mastery, however, but to the pri-ate sense of loss. At the finale, as the oung dancers trade hits in their own, ip-hop style, their taped voices are ayed over their dazzling dance. Even they triumph, we hear them strug-ing with a sense of being thrown vay by the culture: "I didn't give up t. I'm trying not to." "I'm not lost be-use: one, my mother, and two, tap ancing." "You know, a lot of people at I looked up to when I was youn-er and wanted to be like, now they ead or in jail or, you know what I ean?" "Tap—tap sorta like saved e. You know what I'm sayin'?" Words e not the dancers' chosen language, ut by staging tap in this narrative way Volfe makes the accident of their sur-val at once articulate, terrifying, and ry beautiful.

N "Bring In 'da Noise/Bring In 'da Funk," George C. Wolfe has used lover to write a play and make his oints about America. Wolfe does less ell when he is trying to impose him-lf on a dead white male like Wil-am Shakespeare, who comes with a ready-made story and the vocabulary to tell it. Wolfe's acrylic version of "The Tempest," a street-theatre production brought indoors (it had its début last summer at the Public's Delacorte Theatre, in Central Park), is billed as "a New World vision." But the vision on display at the Broadhurst Theatre consists largely of Old World avant-garde theatrics. We've seen these tricks before: the circle of sand (Peter Brook's "Carmen"); the storm at sea, complete with bobbing model frigate and waving bolts of cloth (Ingmar Bergman's "The Winter's Tale"); Ariel's robotic posturing (Meyerhold's biomechanics). "What kind of a Shakespeare production is this that smashes through Europe?" asks the polemical program note, referring to the map of Europe that is displayed on the stage before the shipwreck that strands the royal party is conjured up. "This is not the stuff of psychological theatre," the note continues. "This is bigger. It's a piece of spatial poetry that at once exposes the deep pain of cultural silence and celebrates the angry explosion of that silence." No, what it exposes is Wolfe's worrying glibness, his insecurity with Shakespeare's poetry, and his refusal to engage the text. Pyrotechnics like drumming, Indonesian shadow puppets, and Brazilian stilt walkers are intended to engage the intellect "through our viscera" (the jejune program note again). On the contrary, the technically skillful production never delivers an iota of the intellectual freight it claims to be carrying. Wolfe and his Prospero, Patrick Stewart, excite the audience without illuminating it; we leave the theatre remembering the sound of drums and the spectacle of gargantuan Brazilian saint-goddesses but not one vivid line of the poetry. With this "Tempest," Wolfe, the master of multicultural ceremonies, has his Broadway hit, but he also has an act of cultural brigandage on his hands. ♦

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But Clark said surpassing the record is not significant in his mind. "That's the way the ball bounces," Clark said. "It's a job and you do it. You feel like getting done, so you get done. That's about it. . . It's a big accomplishment for the people to have put up with me for 35 years. It's a two-way sword, you know. One hand washes the other."

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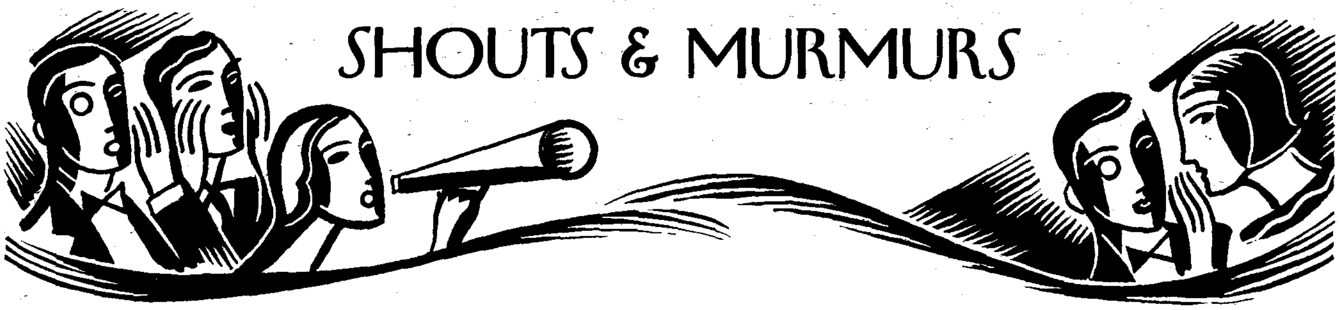
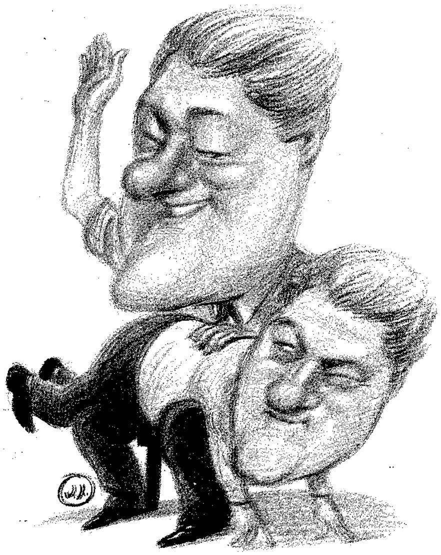


SHOUTS & MURMURS

REGRETS ONLY

BY JAMIE MALANOWSKI

THERE has been a lot of confusion lately about statements I have made. For example, the other day, when I told wealthy contributors that I thought I had raised taxes too much, many of them assumed I meant that I regretted raising taxes too much. Well, no way. What I regret is that some people may think I raised taxes too much, and I just wanted to reassure them that Dick Morris thinks I should feel their pain.



Similarly, when I called Ben Wattenberg and told him that I should have governed more like a President and less like a prime minister, I didn't mean that I hadn't governed like a President. What I meant was that I liked Ben's book, or some of the words in it, and I regret not sending him a Hallmark card that said so.

In light of these apparent confusions, I want to say once and for all what I regret and what I don't.

First, I regret shutting down the government. I'm sure some people missed it very much. On the other hand, I don't regret that the Republicans are taking most of the blame for it. What I regret most is that whenever I find myself in these controversies other people don't get the blame more often.

Also, looking back, I want to say that I regret spending so much time dodging the draft. I don't regret having actually dodged it, but I do regret that I had to do so much maneuvering, because it's hard for people to believe that it just kind of happened. Because I also kind of regret never having been in the military. Mind you, I don't regret that I never did any actual soldiering, but I do regret not having a medal or a small war wound to point to whenever Bob Dole mentions World War II.

I also regret that my Administration got off on the wrong foot. I regret Zoë Baird, I regret Kimba Wood, I regret the flap over gays in the military. I regret that it came up so early, and that I wasn't more decisive, that I didn't step on a few toes, although I'm not sure at this point which side's toes I should regret not having stepped on. What I do regret is that Sam Nunn isn't gay. That would have been a big help.

I do regret Whitewater. I don't think I did anything wrong, but in case I am incorrect, and I did do stuff that was wrong, I want to say I regret it, if only because I never got anything out of it except a big fat headache. I of course regret that Vince Foster committed suicide, and I regret that afterward many of my aides engaged in behavior that looked coveruppish, although in saying this I don't mean to imply that they actually covered anything up. Mostly, I regret that nobody accepts what we say and lets it go at th

I do regret that we didn't get o
health-care program passed. Of cours
I regret that it was an incomprehensib
complex and seemingly very expensi
program—I'm sure we could have do
better. But in saying that I don't me
to imply that somebody had a bett
plan and we blew it. Although we
never know. What I really regret is th
people in this great country of ours co
tinue to get sick.

I regret what Newt Gingrich and t
Republicans are doing to our soci
safety net. I regret that Newt is hurti
the poor. I also regret that Newt is
good at his job. I regret, too, that wh
he was born Newt's parents didn't pla
him on a hillside where he could
eaten by wolves. By that I don't me
that I actually wish he had been eat
by wolves; it would be O.K. if he h
just been raised by wolves, and was no
under scientific study in some remote
cility. Whose funding we could cut o
Albeit with great regret.

I do regret that there was a poi
in time when Hillary and I had a l
than perfect marriage, and I do r
gret the pain that this caused her.
love Hillary very much, and I depe
on her counsel, although I regret th
she never came up with a better sto
on that cattle-futures business. Wh
I am happily married to Hillary,
regret that there isn't some way
could also be married to the girls
"Friends."

Finally, I regret that I haven't been
better communicator, because th
more people would like me, and
wouldn't be facing a situation I wou
deeply regret; namely, losing
job. Mostly, I regret that in 1996 I ca
run against myself. But I'm trying.

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